AC EXCLUSIVE:



An Interview with Petro Tyschtschenko

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QuikPak Welcomes Gateway 2000 to the Amiga Community

Once again it seems that the Amiga Community is subjected to another sharp turn on the rollercoaster that is the future of the Amiga. The recent announcement by Gateway 2000 that its bid to purchase the assets of Amiga Technologies has been successful is truly a surprise. Yet, it is a surprise that holds much promise.

Gateway 2000 is a tremendous success story - continually scoring top marks in customer satisfaction surveys based on service, support, and product reliability. Gateway 2000 is a leader in its market, and brings to the Amiga Community a wealth of resources and knowledge.

While we are understandably dissappointed that our own bid was unsuccessful, we at QuikPak remain as committed as ever to the future of the Amiga. We have devoted a large portion of our energies to developing the Amiga market and supporting the community, and we have no intention of abandoning our position now. The Gateway 2000 purchase may represent an excellent opportunity to breathe new life into the Amiga platform. We've maintained all along that we believe in the future of the Amiga, and stand by our statements.

Thank you once again for your continuing support, and we look forward to bringing you new information as it becomes available. We look forward to working with you, the user, and all our other partners in making the Amiga's future as bright as possible. And, we look forward to the opportunity of working with the newest player in the Amiga field, Gateway 2000.

Sincerely,
Dan Robinson
Director of Business Development
QuikPak

Dave Ziembicki
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Editorial Content

Petro Tyschtschenko, He Keeps Going and Going and Going...

We are extremely fortunate this month. We not only have some very good articles from our Amazing Authors, but we have Amiga International's Petro Tyschtschenko on record both at the Amiga Atlanta meeting and in an AC exclusive interview.

Getting Petro to talk has never been difficult. Petro is one of the most accessible leaders in the Amiga community—now or ever. He answers his own phone (a few months ago, he had no choice—he was the only one there) and he is always direct and honest. However, lately, the biggest problem with Petro has been keeping up with him.

When I held the interview with him for this issue on a Saturday (please see page 48), it had been exactly four weeks since our meeting in London. In that time, he had been to Gateway 2000 in Souix City, Brussels, Atlanta, and I believe Russia. He told me that he had not had a weekend off in some time. I am sure this is true and I know he continued to keep moving after the interview. The next Monday, I needed to go over a few of his answers and I received his call after he returned from a meeting in Paris.

In fact, the original date for our interview was scrubbed because he was stuck in a massive traffic jam in Germany. A business trip that he decided to drive to was only three hours away by car. However, on his return, there was a truck accident of some kind and his travel time went from three hours to six.

Petro has been on the front lines of the Amiga for some time. His efforts have not only sustained the Amiga with trustees and bankers through two bankruptcies (a first), but he has also worked to keep the Amiga user involved with the product. This is why his trip to Amiga Atlanta (please see page 12) was not surprising.

Petro went to Atlanta to give Amiga users as much information and personal service as he was capable of providing. His speech and answers were honest and straight forward. His answers were not always exactly what Amiga users wanted to hear (no massive claims of new Amigas in the next thirty days), however his answers were believable and even acceptable. Petro has come to symbolize, for the Amiga at least, the Energizer Bunny. He keeps going and going and going...

Waiting For Gateway

For all of Petro's continued hard work, I still hear the phrase, "I am waiting to see what Gateway does." In short, a collection of Amiga vendors, dealers, and even some users have decided that they aren't going to make any plans until Gateway 2000 tells them exactly what they will do. What makes this irritating is that Gateway 2000 has already said everything they can at this point.

At the London press conference (see the article on page 48 of the July issue of Amazing Computing), Gateway 2000's Vice President of Global Marketing, Jim Taylor, was asked a round of questions at which point he stopped and said, "We didn't buy the Amiga to make it smaller. We want the Amiga to grow." It was obvious that he felt these questions were already answered by the fact that Gateway 2000 had bought the Amiga.

Gateway 2000 has no intention of backing away from the Amiga. They know the Amiga offers them opportunities and possibilities they cannot get through the PC marketplace. What bothers the doubting Thomases of this industry is that Gateway will not telegraph their moves and tell the world what they are doing. Apparently the Amiga market has been spoiled by a group of "bidders" who talked a lot but did nothing when the bids were to be placed.

Gateway 2000 has built their reputation in a different arena. Their work has been to have machines ready for shipment when announced. The Amiga is now in the big leagues with big league players and the one thing that can hurt us is if this waiting fever continues.

The problem with this thinking is that it is exactly this inactivity in the marketplace that will keep Gateway silent. Why should Gateway chance anything with the Amiga if its own developers don't think enough of it to sell their goods and provide help to their customers.

Its time to fish or cut bait. It is time we all found ways to spark the Amiga marketplace. If you are an Amiga user now is the time to ask about the upgrades and expansions you need for your system. Question dealers and developers and when you feel you have discovered the pieces to the system that will do what you want, create it.

The Amiga has been a resilient platform. It has weathered two bankruptcies and still managed to stay alive. The classic problem has always been that it isn't conflict that kills a good idea, it is indifference. Now is the time we need to demand more from ourselves, our vendors, and our developers. For if the Amiga is going to survive, it will need a viable existing market, not a waiting room. We all need to be more like Petro and keep going and going and going...

Sincerely,

Don Hicks
Managing Editor

Amazing Computing/AMIGA

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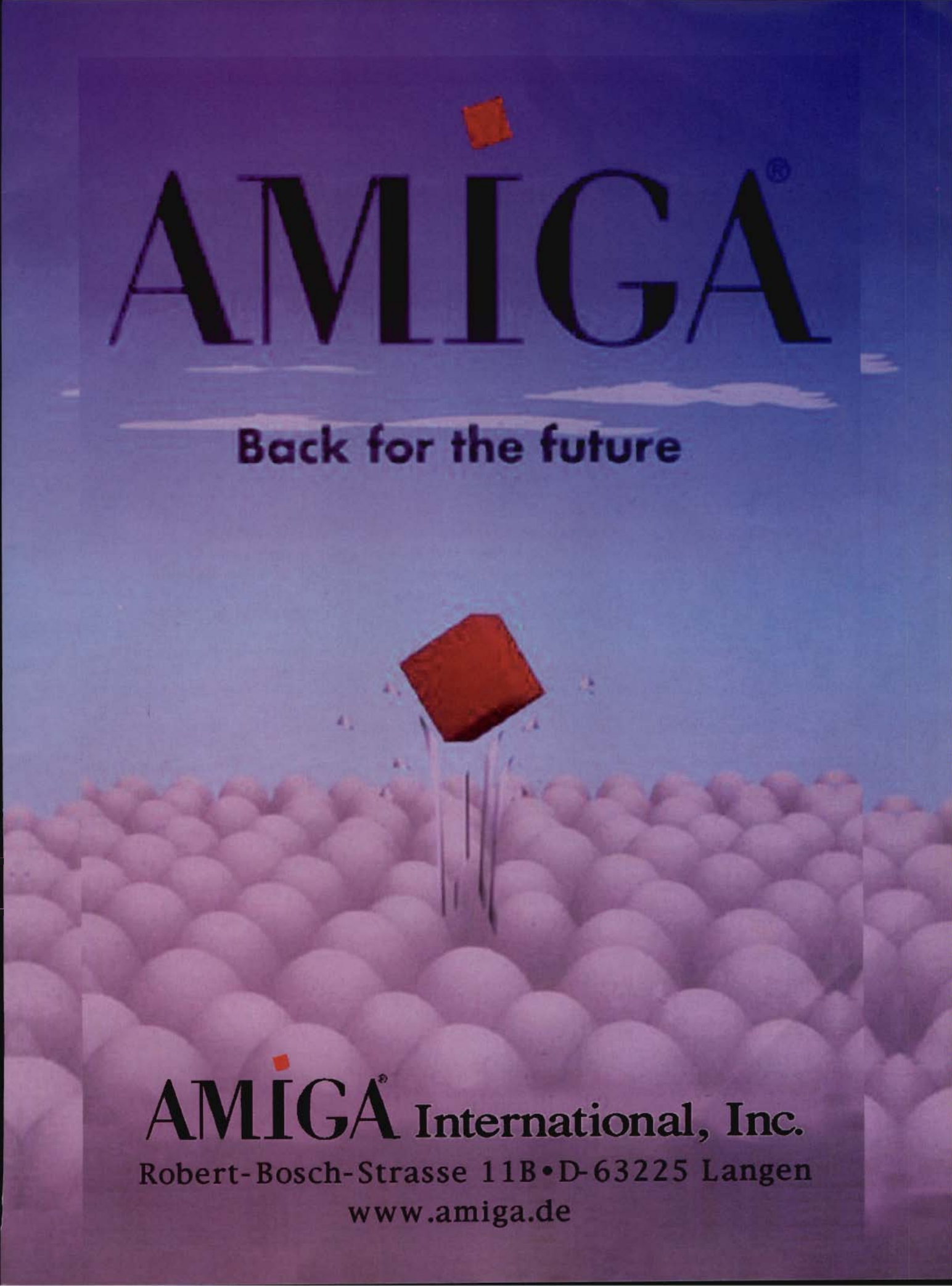
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FEEDBACK

"So to Gateway I say this... Market this machine! It will sell, and it will make money for you."

Dear AC:

I would first like to share an experience I had with Software Hut. I recently purchased an Amiga 4000T, and had a problem getting the video to work properly with it. The computer was fine, but for some reason my ten year old Commodore 2002 monitor would not display the video signal correctly. Since the 2002 monitor had been operating perfectly with my A500 for ten years, there was no reason to suspect it to be the source of my problems.

I worked through this problem with several technical support, and customer service people at Software Hut, and the service I received was excellent. Each person I worked with was very knowledgeable about the system hardware and software. The problem was resolved in a minimum amount of time, and the system has been running flawlessly since.

Prior to purchasing my 4000T, I price shopped around a bit, and found Software Hut to be price competitive. Yet even though there was no price difference, the deciding factor in my purchasing decision was the history I have with this company.

After I purchased the computer, I had numerous technical questions. Even though the "big sale" had already been made, the technical support people continued to assist me in getting up and running with my new machine.

Purchasing a computer is unlike purchasing many other products; you get more than just a piece of hardware, you enter into a relationship with the company you purchased it from. I'm glad I purchased my Amiga 4000T from Software Hut.

On a related note, I decided to stick with Amiga as my platform of choice for a number of reasons. Although the Amiga remains in a niche market. I feel confident that the machine is slated for a comeback, *but only if Gateway markets the machine properly.*

I do quite a bit of software development as a hobby. Having programmed in over fifteen different computer languages, in seven distinct operating systems, including Windows, AmigaOS is clearly the best operating system I have had the pleasure to use. Its efficiency, combined with its flexibility makes the Amiga the only platform I will use seriously.

The only problem with the Amiga is lack of marketing. A lesser machine would have certainly perished when you combine Commodore's marketing strategy of build it and they will come, with Irving Gould years, and about a year of no new machines being built. Yet, despite the marketing departments best efforts, the Amiga survives, largely because of its superior operating system. A stock A500 will still multi-task with greater flexibility than a 200 Mhz MMX Pentium based Windows system.

So to Gateway I say this... Market this machine! It will sell, and it will make money for you.

I'm reminded of the days when I purchased my C64. Everybody thought it was just a "games machine". Basically, it was. It also had a few serious flaws: 40 column display, and that wretched 1571 disk drive. Software vendors refused to write programs for it. But Commodore had the intelligence to toss it on the shelves of every Toys-R-Us around. Anybody who wanted a computer, but couldn't afford the expensive IBM machines scooped them up. Finally, when the machine passed the one million mark, all those same software vendors started to take notice. They started developing software for this little "games machine", and things really got rolling. A little machine with a crummy little floppy drive wedged itself quite nicely into the marketplace. Imagine what would happen if you put some A1200s on the shelves of Toys-R-Us, or Wal-Mart?

Software vendors love this machine because it is easy to program. With a few operating system calls, programmers can get a lot of functionality with very little effort. Once this machine starts selling like in the "old days", software vendors will easily rediscover their passion for this truly great machine.

Unfortunately the gap is closing between the Amiga and its rivals. No matter how sluggish Windows is, eventually there will be a microchip that will be able to keep pace. If Gateway acts quickly to get this machine back in the mainstream market they will have exclusive rights to a popular machine.

Sincerely,
Peter A Phelps
Louisville KY

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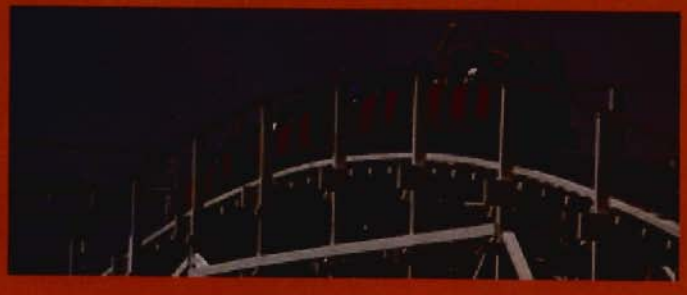
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The second CD title is The AGA Experience Vol 3. This is the third in the series of ready to run public domain software downloaded from various sources including popular BBSs and internet resources. The title retails for £14.95 and requires an Amiga with 2 Meg+, AGA, and WB3. Both these titles can be ordered from Sadenes directly and dealer inquiries are also welcome.

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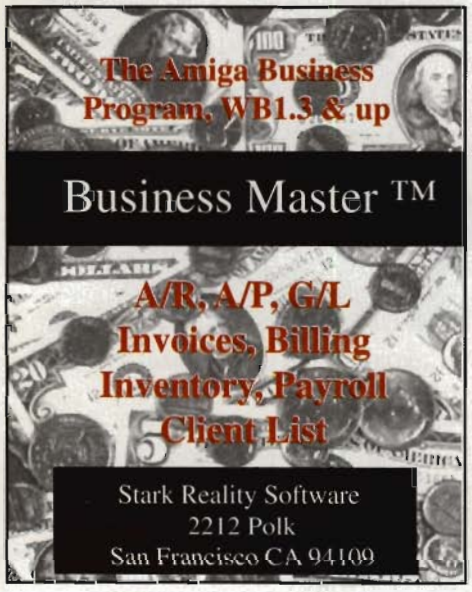
Impulse has announced new features in the design process for Imagine 6.0. A new GUI, inverse kinematics, new preferences editor, optimized for the 040 and 060, power PC Support, new special effects(Jiggle and Jitter), new textures, linear fog fall off, new staging functions to make character animation very easy, animation Deform Tool, free form 2D spline editor with PS font support, new and improved lens flares options, volumetric Light sources, ASL file requester support, Jpeg file support, new electronic manual with Interactive index, free technical world wide web support, and more are being offered in the next edition. Their promise is to make Imagine for the Amiga the best 3D package on any platform.

The rub and the offer is that all of these changes could take at least 12 months. Imagine has created the CUP program where they state you can direct the flow and development of the software. The cost is $100.00 US. As a member of the CUP they promise no less than 4 upgrades over the next 12 months. CUP members will receive a special user name and password with a secure location on the web to

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coverage on page 48 of this issue.

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download the newest code. While disks will be sent to those without net access, those with net access may get more than 4 updates per year.

According to Impulse, CUP members will save at least 50% on the release of the final 6.0 update and possibly more as the projected price for the upgrade is over $200.00.
In addition, Impulse states that the Amiga community is now unfortunately smaller and they need to know that you are still out there keeping the Amiga alive and kicking.

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CNet Amiga Professional Version 4

CNet Amiga BBS has changed ownership to ZenMetal Software and CNet has undergone a multitude of changes. All sysop GUIs have been redesigned for a more professional look and feel. CNet now has some native Internet applications such as Telnet, NNTP news retrieval/posting and an Internet Relay Chat (IRC) client. FTP and SMTP mail import/export are also planned as well as many other "core" BBS features.

Those interested in ordering CNet Amiga should access the Official CNet Amiga Homepage at http://tggh.net/~rakey. These pages contain screenshots of CNet Amiga Professional, history, changes, other CNet links, developer e-mail addresses and full ordering information. Both framed and non-framed versions of the page are available at this site.

SASG gets over 100,00 hits!

The Standardized Amiga Shareware Group has announced that their web site (www.sasg.com) has attracted over 100,000 visitors so far. The site is the home of SASG, a group founded to create a better means of shareware distribution and payment.

The SASG is an alliance of well-known Amiga shareware authors with the spirit to enrich the shareware community with unprecedented service & performance. Their main efforts are to promote Amiga shareware products of exceptional quality and to make these available at a reasonable registration fee.

The SASG is a non-profit organization which ensures that the author of a shareware product receives 100% of his well-deserved registration fee. This system guarantees that software programmers do not get exploited and end users can register high-quality applications for only a few dollars.

To facilitate this, SASG International has just announced that they have completely renewed their services and infrastructure to satisfy the needs of Amiga shareware users worldwide. They have full Internet presence and are offering various new registration methods, including fax, email and online registration. Promising that they have learned from the past and listened to the requests of their customers, they claim the best ideas and intentions went into their new services.

SignEngine has a New Address

The makers of SignEngine SM-100 (Amiga Sign Making Software) has a new address as follows:
LaserCraft Unlimited
20 Hamilton Cres
Georgetown, Ont Canada
Tel: 905-873-6613
Email: signguy@aztec-net.com
www.aztec-net.com/~signguy

•AC•

New Product, Industry Announcement?
Send it to: New Products Editor,
Amazing Computing,
P.O. Box 2140,
Fall River, MA 02722-2140,
(508) 678-4200,
FAX (508) 675-6002

Decision Maker

DM by J.L. White takes the drudgery out of moving selected chunks of video to your hard drives. You have full control over your video deck directly from your Amiga screen. When you find useable footage, simply set your IN & OUT points and add it to your EDL. Batch digitizing has NEVER been so easy! Import & Export CMX or Grass Valley formats. Requires Newtek Flyer, VLAB Motion or Draco system. Support for the Sony VX 1000 now included!

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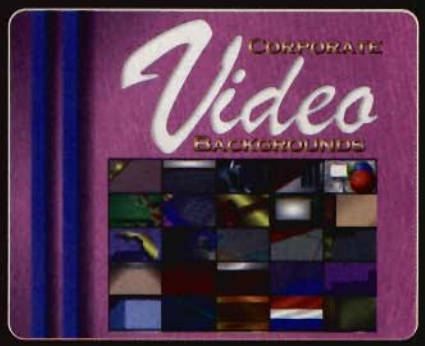


Corporate Video Backgrounds

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Retail: $199.95

A collection of 250 visually stunning royalty free backgrounds constructed primarily for bumpers, bullet builds, and video overlays. All images were designed by award winning graphic artist Guy Bickel. Everyone that has bought CVB have called to thank us for releasing such a high quality set of professional art work. Find out why! Perfect for use with any linear or non linear system. Comes in IFF 24, Pict and Targa formats.





Control Tower

- **Sale: $169.95**
Retail: $249.95

Control Tower by J.L. White contains over 200 macros that let you soar to new heights with the Newtek Video Flyer. Everything from clean Picture In Picture, to Blue Screen Compositing to Batch Processing of Clips & Frames make this a MUST HAVE program for ALL Flyer owners. Saves hours of time by automating the entire process. Find out why this has become a classic in such a short period of time. Requires Image FX and the Toaster Flyer.

Now Includes
Over 200 Macros!



Surface Pro for Lightwave

- **Sale: $79.95**
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A collection of useful, ready to use, low memory, seamless surfaces for the Lightwave Professional. SP by Leo Martin offers a wide variety of over 60 seamless image based surfaces that are instantly available through Lightwave. Includes Liquid Metal, Circuit Board, Nebula, Globe Wrap, Water, Flames, Marble and more. Also included are a number of tech maps as well as the Pro Textures Combo Collection.



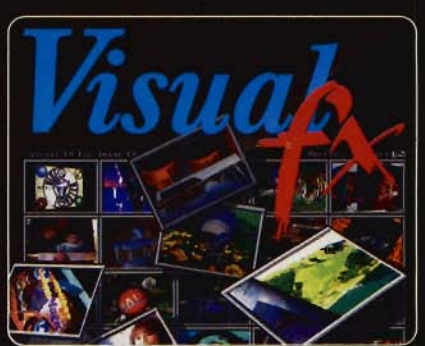


Visual FX for Image FX

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VFX by J.L. White brings all the power of Image FX to your finger tips. Simply select what effect you want to create, replace our default images with your own, and hit Render! It's that simple! Each volume comes with 20 effects with tons of options. Beginners can use the default settings while the more advanced users can customize to suit their needs. This has been our fastest selling product on the Amiga to date. Buy one today and you will see why! Volumes for Lightwave also available.





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Not just another Amiga User Group meeting.



Amiga Atlanta, Inc. User Group Presents: Amiga International's Petro Tyschtschenko

"The Amiga market cannot afford to split; we must go together. Together, in one direction."

On Saturday May 31 in the Williams meeting room of the Dunwoody Public Library, Petro Tyschtschenko of Amiga International, gave his first North American public speech to the Amiga Atlanta, Inc. User Group. Speaking to a packed audience, Mr. Tyschtschenko spoke of the future of the Amiga and the need for Amiga user participation around the world.

Mr. Tyschtschenko was the third speaker on the three man roster. A sales representative from US Robotics gave a short presentation on US Robotics' future. This was followed by Skal Loret, a founding member of the Jay Miner Society for the Advancement of Personal Computing who discussed the founding of the society and promised the Amiga community that they would see good things from this organization.

Mr. Tyschtschenko's presentation was divided into two segments. He addressed the audience with a prepared speech and, after a short break, he conducted a question and answer segment with the audience.

Petro Tyschtschenko

"Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for this kind invitation here to Atlanta. Thank you very much for the invitation. This is my first event here in the United States, and I'm really impressed to see all these activities around our Amiga. When I arrived yesterday midnight, I could already feel the warm hospitality. It is nice to see that our Amiga platform is gifted by a community of competent people.



May 31, 1997, Amiga Atlanta Inc. attracted a full crowd for its Saturday meeting.

"Ladies and gentlemen, it is no longer a secret that we have got a friend in business — Gateway 2000, the new home for our Amiga. Before I continue, first of all I would like to say thank you for your understanding, for your patience, that you, my friends, have kept Amiga alive.

"It is your success that our wonderful technology, our Amiga, has survived. With Gateway 2000, we all, and Amiga, I believe, will have a great and bright future. Gateway 2000 is a well-known, solid and established company in a computer world. Gateway 2000 is a leading global marketer of personal computers. Ted Wait, the chairman and CEO, founded Gateway 2000 in September, 1985. The company is located in North Sioux City, South Dakota and Gateway 2000 became a public company in 1993. Today, Gateway 2000 sells more PCs, compatible systems in the U.S., through direct marketing, than any other company. Gateway 2000 has a vision: to be the leading marketer of personal computers, products in the world, and Amiga is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Gateway 2000.

"Gateway's mission is to grow the business faster than the competition by better understanding and serving the desires of the customer. And, ladies and gentlemen, Amiga is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Gateway 2000. Gateway 2000's values are respect, teamwork, common sense, effectiveness, aggressiveness, honesty and, of course, fun. And

Amiga is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Gateway 2000.

"Should I say more? You would like to hear some facts about revenue? No problem. Revenue up 37% from 1995. 1.9 million Gateway PCs shipped in 1996. Shipments up 43% from '95. Earnings up 47% from '95. International revenue up 69.5%. I believe, ladies and gentlemen, there's a bright future for Amiga, for our community and for Amiga International.

"As I mentioned already in London, the basis of my strategy is 3 elements:

"Supporting the existing Amiga community. How? That's why I'm here. Through conventions, through press conferences, and the Internet (watch www.Amiga.de), meetings, of course, and useful initiatives coming from the Amiga community.

"Second, leveraging the existing Amiga technology through broad licensing. The basic of success in this project is to work together with partners to define a common path of development.

"The Amiga market cannot afford to split; we must go together. Together, in one direction. For us to keep the market alive it is necessary to assist many companies in developing products. Products through broad licensing. Our licensing policy will be very open, broad, and of course, simple. Licensing will be focused on standards, Amiga OS, chip sets, trademarks, boards, etc. Whatever you would like.

"The third basic element of the strategy is assisting in developing new products, based on open standards, through the home computer and video market. It is very important that we explore an open Amiga platform and use industry standard components. That would make our products cheaper to produce, faster to develop, and easier to upgrade.

"At this time, we are identifying candidates to manage the R&D department. Be sure, we will explore the most efficient method of determining R&D. Amiga's intention is to support the development community through concepts such as the open Amiga initiative. We will explore other concepts to bring developers on the platform. We will explore the development of an Amiga OS upgrade and we will address the features and functions that are necessary. You can be absolutely sure that Gateway 2000 will provide resources to reinvigorate the Amiga marketplace and keep Amiga a profitable subsidiary.

"Long live our Amiga and our strong community.

"Thank you very much.

Questions and Answers

In the question and answer segment during the second half of the presentation, Petro fielded questions from the audience for almost 45 minutes. One of the first questions concerned the support expected from Gateway 2000. Petro responded that he had full autonomy as it concerned Amiga International. He stated he was working within a budget, but if he needed extra money for marketing, or other important areas, he only would need to put his case before Gateway's management.

One key request from the audience was a call for an Amiga laptop—even if it was lousy. Petro agreed there should be a laptop, but he would not agree to create a lousy one.

Petro repeatedly asked the users for their support and their patience. He stated that the days of Commodore were filled with talk and promises and that his agreement with Gateway 2000 was that there would be no announcements until the products were ready.

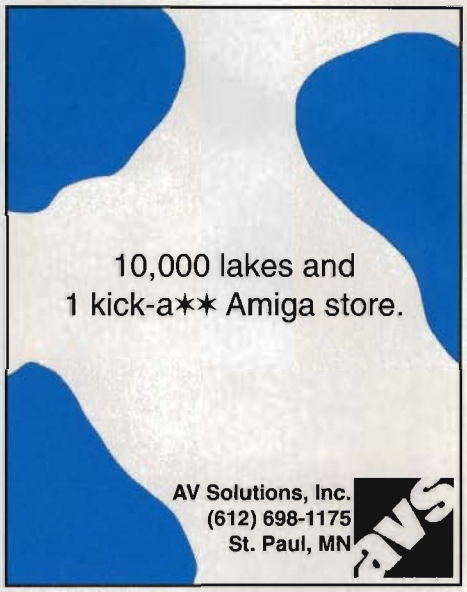
Petro answered questions concerning the current price:preformance ratio of the Amiga. He stated that it was unfair to compare the Amiga with PC systems, but he understood the concern. He promised that Amiga International would continue to work to lower prices on the Amiga. However, in his opinion, he believed the real emphasis should be placed on new machine development.

Petro was asked where he expected the Amiga to be in a year. "In one year we should have new products and new users. We have to focus on people who do not understand the Amiga, to motivate them, and bring them into our family. Because we are truly a family. We are different than the PC, God thanks."

At the close of the presentation, Petro was given copies of the Amiga Atlanta Inc.'s video tapes as well as an AAi logo golf shirt.



Is this a bribe? At the close of the meeting, Petro was given copies of Amiga Atalanta's videos as well as an AAi logo golf shirt.



Circle 147 on Reader Service card.

Tapes Available

Amiga Atlanta Inc. is offering a video tape of Petro's speech and Question and answer segment for $20 US in NTSC format and $25 US in PAL European format. You can send cash (US), check, or Money order to: Amiga Atlanta, PO Box 49103, Atlanta, GA 30359-1103. When ordering, please state you are requesting a copy of the "Petro and Skal Video".

Amiga International asked that if you drop an order in the mail, please notify AAi Vice-President Bob Castro at: bcastro@mindspring.com that your order is in the mail. He will duplicate your copy of the program and have it ready for shipment as soon as your order arrives.

•AC•

Don't miss
the AC exclusive interview with Petro Tyschtschenko on page 48 of this issue.

Real 3D version 3.5



Although Real 3D Version 3.5 has been ported to Windows, RealSoft has not forgotten its Amiga users.

by R. Shamms Mortier

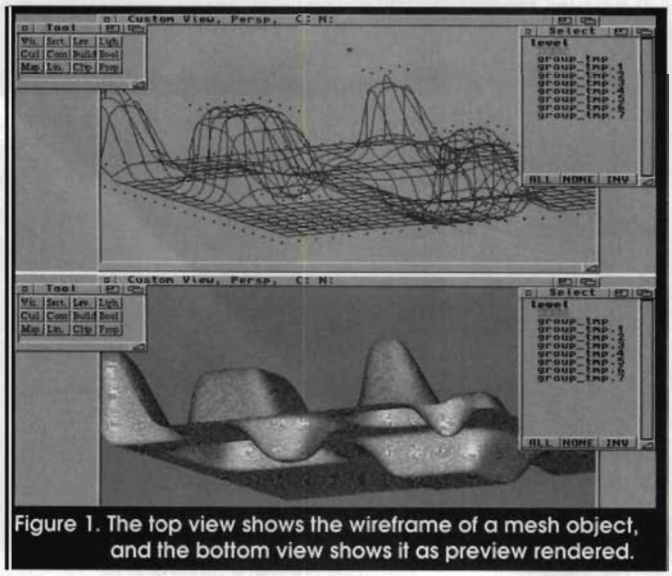


Figure 1. The top view shows the wireframe of a mesh object, and the bottom view shows it as preview rendered.

The last time I wrote anything about Real 3D, the dynamic 3D modeling and animation system from RealSoft in Scandinavia, was back when it was in version 1.5. That was quite a few years ago. Although Real 3D Version 3.5 has been ported to Windows, the same improved version is also available for the Amiga. Like the best and most steadfast Amiga developers, RealSoft has not forgotten its Amiga users.

What's new in 3.5

Let's start with a basic overview of some of the new features present in Real 3D version 3.5, and the enhancements of some features from previous versions.

1. Improved Collision Detection. This allows objects to "know" about the existence of other objects, so movements do not allow objects to intersect each other.

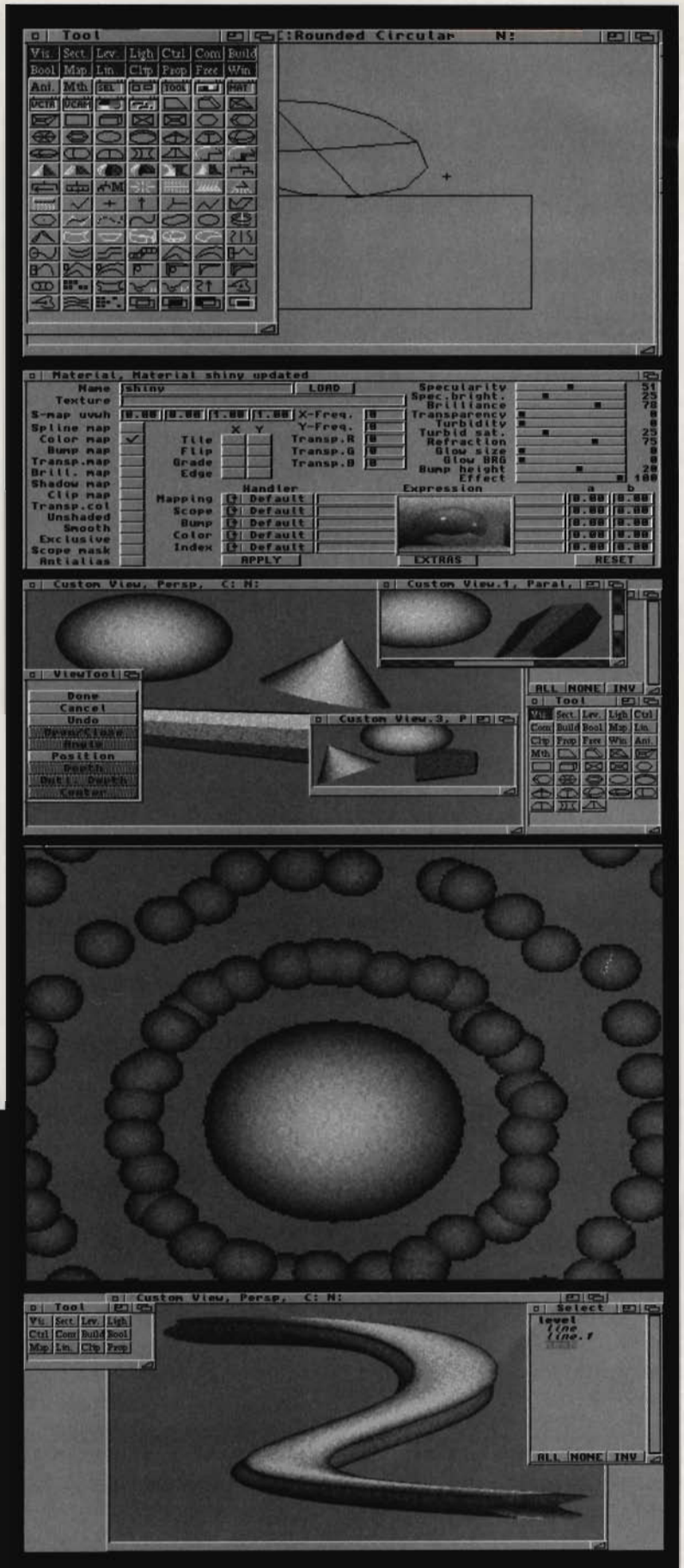
Left: Grant Neisner created this trademark image for RealSoft, using Real 3D.

2. Improved Skeletons. A Real 3D "Skeleton" is the same as a "Bone" in LightWave 3D, allowing you to animate objects without segmenting their parts. In version 3.5 of Real 3D, this incorporates a control of the torque (magnitude and extent) of associated skeletal parts.
3. Enhanced Glow controls, with a wider scale for creating glows.
4. Enhanced anti-aliasing of Field-renders, for better broadcast videographic results.
5. New material attributes, including the addition of ambient, reflected, and filtered colors in assigned materials.
6. Improved camera controls. This includes the addition of a new interactive rotate, scale, and pan view with the right mouse button.
7. User definable rendering color for B-Spline wireframes.
8. Support for infinite grids.
9. An animation frame renumbering capability that allows the user to set the index count.
10. The addition of quality controls for JPEG saves.

There are other new and improved features as well, but this gives you a general idea of the depth of the Real 3D 3.5 changes.

An Overview of Real 3D

It's been a while since we covered Real 3D and many users may be unfamiliar with its existence as an Amiga 3D art and animation alternative. As a European product, Real 3D enjoys a better penetration of the overseas market than the American market, though it does advertise fairly regularly in magazines that address its Windows version. RealSoft, however,



Right from Top to Bottom:

Figure 2. As you can see from the Tool palette on the left, the more group icons you click on in Real 3D, the more the Tool palette is filled with representative choices. This is actually a creative way to make the most out of the limited space in a work area.

Figure 3. The Materials Editor, showing the inset preview screen on the lower right.

Figure 4. You can open as many separate views in Real 3D as you can fit on the screen, each with their own view plane, size, and perspective.

Figure 5. This preview rendering of a "Saturnia" object shows that it is composed of sized spherical rings around a "planetary" center.

Figure 6. Real 3D allows you to generate very organic shapes with its Sweep tool, as this preview rendering demonstrates.





Figure 7 (top). This Real 3D rendering shows the extent of believable reflections and transparencies that the software can help you create.
Figure 8 (bottom). True to life objects and textures can be created with the help of Real 3D.

has taken great pains to make sure its Amiga version stays abreast of all of the changes implemented in the Windows version, at least those that do not require hardware considerations that only the Windows version can accommodate.

Easy Views

Real 3D allows you to zoom in or out with the plus and minus keys, or alternatively with mouse clicks on a zoom button. The view can be turned left/right or up/down by using the cursor keys. All of this is even more valuable when you consider that you can place and render as many separate views of a scene on the interface as space permits, as an aid to rendering and animation.

Materials

Real 3D can create and assign an infinite variety of textures, including animated sequenced frames and morphing textures. Morphed textures are defined as starting "scopes" (A), and ending scopes (B). Both A and B values are input to generate the starting and ending parameters of a material. This is a very nice feature.

Freeform Modeling in Real 3D

Freeform modeling is used to produce organic forms in any 3D application. Freeform models are curvier and more complex than simple primitive models, and are the heart of any 3D creation software that will be used to create and render real world scenes. Freeform meshes are simple to create and modify, and can help form parts of organic objects. The sweep function is also easy to learn to use, requiring nothing more than the creation of a profile and a sweep path, and the command that initiates the sweep. A thorough tutorial for creating a B-Spline 3D Freeform head is included in the documentation.

Custom Modeling Tools

There are some very exciting and unique modeling tools in Real 3D, listed under the Custom/Modeling menu. The first is called "Saturnus", as might be expected, it generates a central sphere with rings of particles around it. The size of the central planet and the particles in the rings are user defined, as are the number of particles and rings. This is a special case particle system utility, as is another: Spiral. Spiral creates... well... spirals, with user defined sizes and quantities.

Animation

Both motion path and keyframe animations can be generated in Real 3D. A full featured keyframe editor is included, allowing you to interact with an object at whatever frame is indicated. Inverse Kinematics is also featured, fostering organic movements. The Real 3D skeleton feature is akin to Bones in LightWave, so that seemingly solid objects can wiggle and

move very convincingly. Periodic motions, like bounces, are easy to generate with Real 3D's specific tools for periodic assigns. A good number of specific tutorials for generating different animation techniques are included in the documentation (Tornado, Bubbles, Elastic Cube and Sphere, Logo Move, Swimming Fish, and more).

Conclusions

If you have experience with professional CAD applications, Real 3D will be a very comfortable environment in which to create. The whole interface and the Hierarchical list is reminiscent of a CAD program. You may have to retrain your intuitive approach to 3D however if you expect to use Real 3D as an experienced LightWave or Aladdin user, since its hierarchical verbal commands and proprietary icons influence a different method of working than that of a more common 3D Graphical User Interface. You will not be able to intuit the creation of objects or animations in Real 3D without an extensive study of the manual and associated read-me files.

While the hierarchical list approach is fine for the initial design of objects, it is not intuitive when it comes to object modification. Users today expect to simply grab an object and rotate or resize it, and are not pleasantly disposed when it comes to interfacing with a list of choices, and then taking several steps to do a simple operation. Real 3D could use a more virtual reality 3D approach to these operations, with the placement of simple tasks relegated to easily decipherable icons in an accompanying tool list.

The Primitives icons are well designed, and can be popped to view by clicking on "VIS" in the Tool Palette. All of the other generic control modifiers are grouped under their own icons as well, which is a way of getting the most out of a limited interface space. A more intuitive method of configuring screen preferences should be developed, so that resolution, number of colors, and screen size for the interface could be more easily set.

When it comes to more complex issues of fine tuning objects, numerical controls or sliders should be added to a separate requester. Placing the UNDO function under the Extras menu is confusing. It belongs as a visible icon or button somewhere on screen at all times.

The Materials menu also has a frustrating bug. The items listed in its menu are ghosted out, although they do respond when selected. At first, I obeyed the ghosted out attribute, and it took me a while to figure out that they were still selectable. I'm sure I'm not the only user bewildered by this.

While I understand that the Amiga community should be thankful that RealSoft is still supporting it with the latest edition of its software, I am not pleased to find that the manual for the Windows version is the same as that for the Amiga. Illustrations that show menus and tool options do not always translate the same for the Amiga edition of the software. There should at least be an addendum add-on manual, even if it's very thin, that describes discrepancies between the Windows and Amiga manuals.

On the very positive side, Real 3D renderings can be absolutely stunning when it comes to photographic reality, and in most cases, rendering time is pretty fast (certainly far faster than previous versions of Real 3D). If you take the time and patience to learn the workings of Real 3D, you can expect to be able to generate exquisite 3D renderings and animations.

Real 3D has more fine tuning high-quality controls than many of the top commercial 3D packages. The main problem is the design of the user interface, allowing the user to easily access and use all of Real 3D's magic.

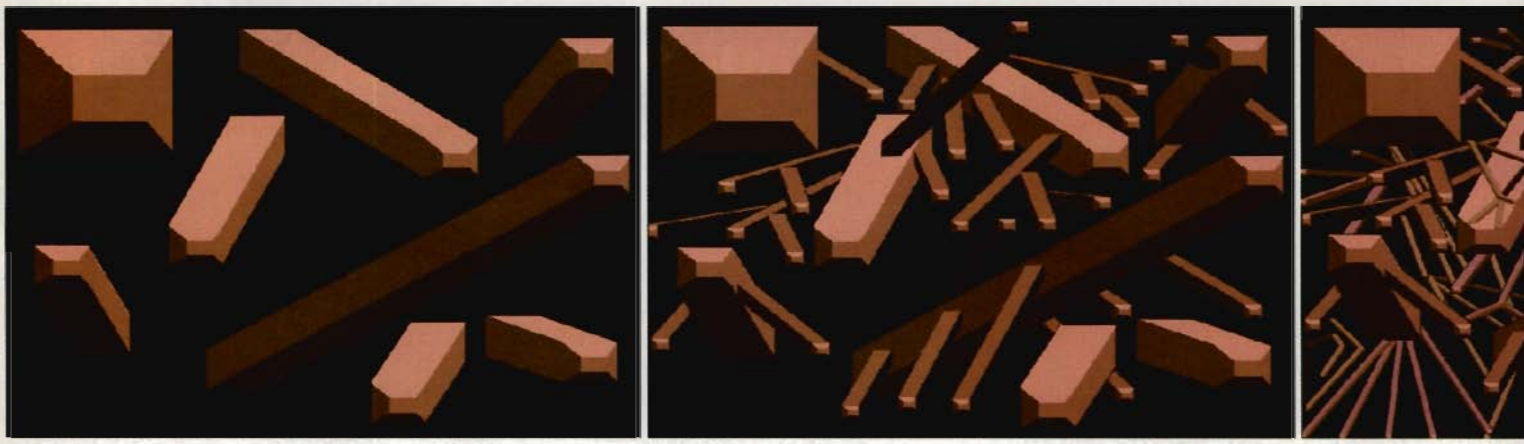
Real 3D and the other Amiga specific 3D art and animation applications are a good reason for Gateway to revamp the Amiga, making it faster and better. If that happens, I am sure Real 3D will find a wider Amiga audience. •AC•

Real 3D version 3.5
RealSoft
dingebre@xmission.com (USA)
satu@realsoft.fi
(Finland Developer Direct)

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2D 3D

Producing 3D art with 2D tools

by R. Shamms Mortier

Are Amiga paint programs less applicable for some high-end creative tasks than Mac and Windows applications like Adobe's Photoshop, Corel's Photopaint, or Macromedia's xRes.? To some degree, yes. For one thing, non-Amiga paint software is much more geared to desktop publishing, and in desktop publishing you are always looking for high DPI output. Typically that output ranges from 300 DPI on up, depending upon the system targeted for the printout. Even prosumer printers address output from 720 to 1200 DPI at this point, and the numbers are going up by the month.

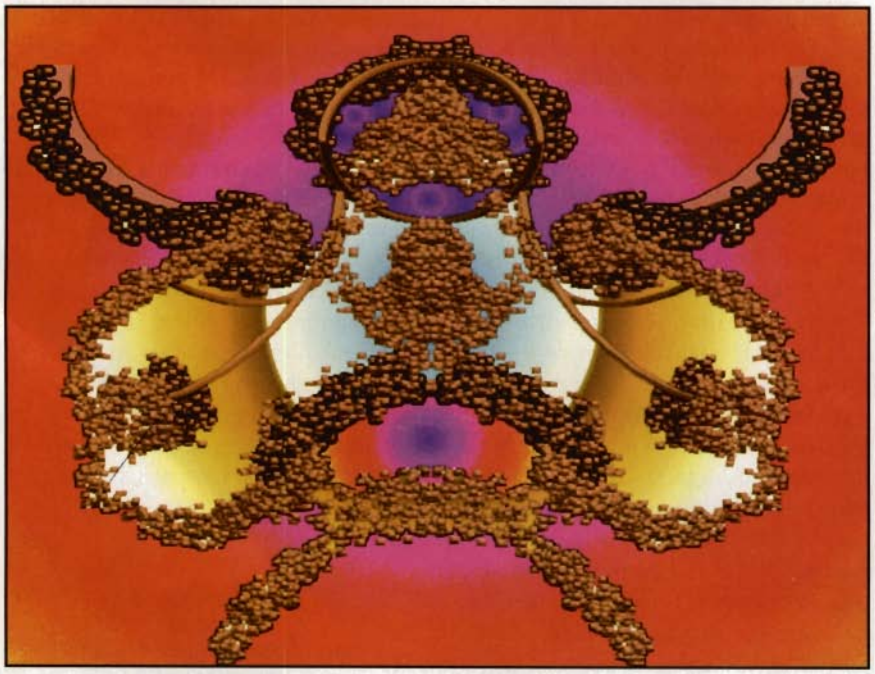
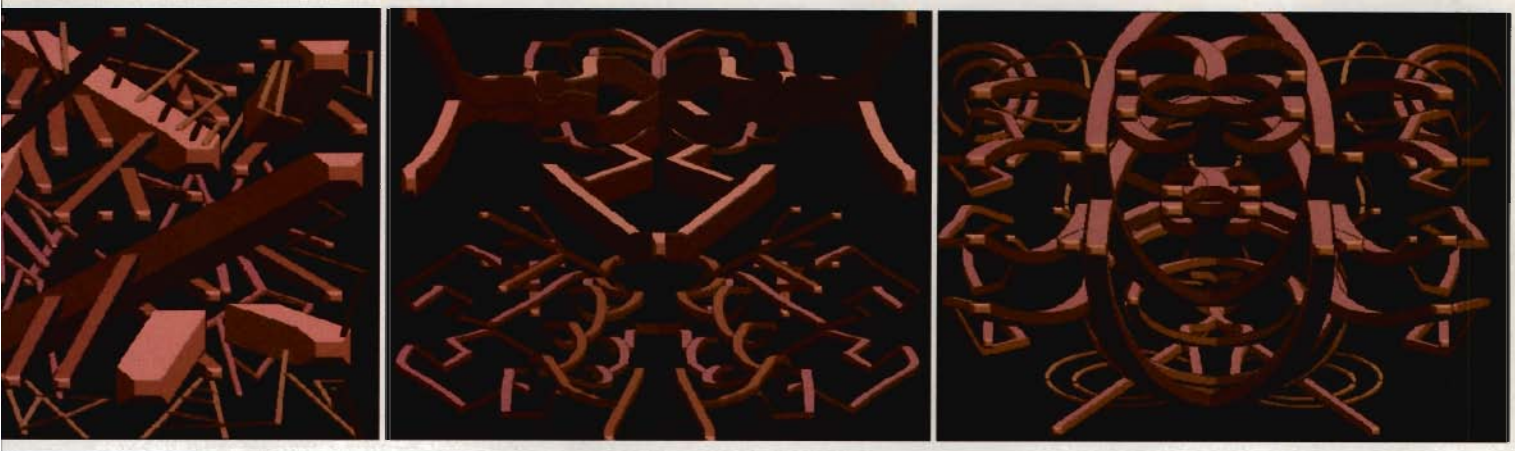


Figure 6. Spraying on small elements with the Mirror tool activated creates shapes that look like beadwork or pebbles.

Let's be fair though. The Amiga was not designed to be a desktop publishing monster. It was designed to address video. Video, like your TV, has a DPI set to as close to 72 as you can get. That's because NTSC, a TV barrier we still suffer under, comes across at about 72 DPI (See the article on page 21).

The Amiga was not designed to be a desktop publishing monster. It was designed to address video.

Although the Amiga has a harder time addressing high resolution print output (though it can be done with a little work and planning), the focus of this article is more about comparative painting options on the Amiga versus other systems. There again, at first glance, the Amiga user feels demoralized. The bells and whistles of Mac and PC paint programs continue to multiply, while Amiga paint programs like DPaint and Brilliance are no



Above from far Left to Right:
Figure 1. The rectangle has become a 3D tubelike object. Notice that the original rectangular brush is at the upper left. If you drag on different angles, the shading of the 3D object changes.
Figure 2. Look at that! Even more 3D possibilities.
Figure 3. Using smaller brushes adds more lace-like elements to the lattice.
Figure 4. The Mirror tool adds more symmetrical interest.
Figure 5. The resulting figure using curved lines and ovals looks somewhat like a Tahitian mask.

longer in development. What about all of the Amiga users who have purchased these and other bitmap painting software years ago? Are their tools so outmoded that the only option is to put the Amiga in a closet and, swallowing hard, resign themselves to the purchase of another platform? Not necessarily.

The arts are not about keeping up with the Joneses as far as anticipating the latest in technological toys. The arts are about what you do as an artist, what you make, and what you say. For that reason, great musicians treasure the banged up instruments they've been patching up for years. And for the same reason, many digital artists are still discovering magical possibilities in limited resolutions and limited palettes on systems that are not state-of-the-art. Besides, familiar tools are like old shoes with more holes than shoe, they feel so comfortable you just can't walk anywhere without them.

Still Exploring

I am amazed when I return to DPaint and Brilliance after a long journey with the painting software on other platforms. I am continually reminded of the breakthroughs that Amiga painting software fostered in its heyday, and what it still offers today. I'd like to point out two specific techniques as an example, one which will be the central focus of this article, and the other for another article to come.

The two techniques involve multiple-tip paint brushes and ANIMbrushes. Let's look at ANIMbrushes first, since we will save the article on how to use them to paint with until another issue.

Fractal Design Painter, the most famous and full featured paint application in the world for the Mac



Figure 7. I suppose I would call this "Mechanistic Consciousness", a cross between Descarte and the Terminator.

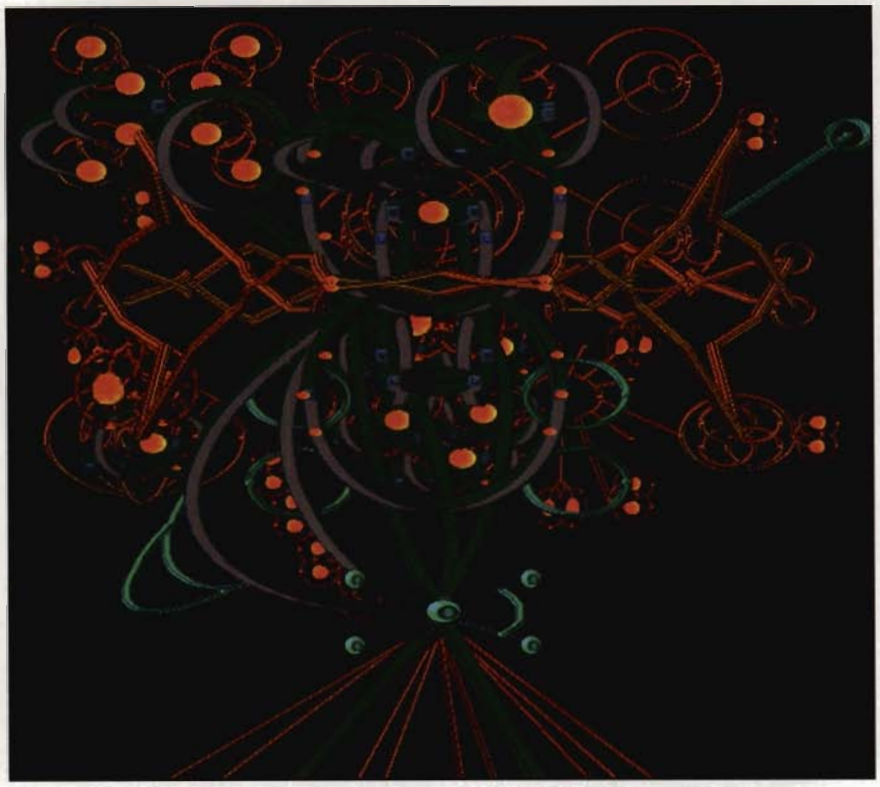


Figure 8. A piece using all of the techniques described in the article. The name commemorates Alice in Wonderland: "Twas Brillig".

and Windows systems, discovered ANIMbrush painting only within the last few years. In Painter, the tool is called the "Image Hose", and it sprays a collection of modified images on the screen. The Amiga has been able to do this since about day two, the only difference being that ANIMbrushes were thought of as animation extensions and not as 2D painting tools. In a coming issue, we will learn how to use ANIMbrushes as painting tools as well.

Multiple-tipped brushes are our concern in this piece, so let's describe and investigate them. What is a Multiple-Tipped brush? Simple. It's a brush, or more accurately a series of grabbed shapes, that have more than one color and/or more than one 2D design.

If you use either DPaint or Brilliance, or another comparable Amiga bitmap painting program, you are aware that you can cut a shape out of the graphics on the screen and paint with it. Commonly, primitive brush shapes consist of a library of oval and rectangles of different sizes that are used to apply a select color or color cycled range. Instead of using a program's primitive brush choice, you can also grab a shape (rectangular or polygonal) from artwork on the screen. Commonly, if you grab while holding down the left mouse button, you pick up a clone of the selected shape. If you hold down the right mouse button, the shape you pick up is cut from the screen, leaving the background color.

As far as painting color, DPaint, Brilliance, and other Amiga painting applications, allow two choices. The first is that the colors painted in using the picked up brush are the actual colors of the brush. The second option is that only the shape of the brush is used, while the color is selected from the palette just as if you were using a built-in primitive brush choice. It is the first option that I find far more interesting, because the picked-up brush can have multiple colors and shapes, and using it as an active paintbrush (or actually brush "nib") produces some absolutely amazing results.

Suggested Attention Items

Art is art, no matter digital or analogue, and artists hate to be given hard and fast rules. That being the case, allow me to suggest some things you might want to pay attention to at the start, allowing for the fact that as you become more acclimated to this painting process, you will likely stretch my suggestions to the breaking point.

The title of this article, 2D 3D, refers to generating graphics that have a 3D look, as if they were produced in a 3D program like Aladdin, Real3D, Imagine, or LightWave. All we will use to create them, however, are the 2D painting tools readily available in Brilliance and DPaint, or in any other Amiga painting software that covers similar bases.

Since we know where we are headed, let's develop a few axioms on how to prepare to get there. Both Brilliance and DPaint have similar ways of producing these effects. I used Brillance as my medium for this example, so any direct tool references are for Brilliance.

1. Draw a rectangle, using four different colors for each side. Make the left and bottom colors darker and the right colors lighter. When you drag this shape as a brush, it gives the impression of a 3D tubular object with dark and light sides. Using the Rectangular Scissors tool and the right mouse button, pick up the rectangle.
2. In Brilliance, select the Straight Line tool. Turn Anti-Aliasing on High. With the rectangular brush attached to your mouse cursor, draw a line. Instead of a 2D line, you will see what appears to be a 3D tube (see Figure 1).
3. Use the same brush resized smaller and draw extended tubes that emerge from the larger tubes. Each time you draw a tube, click on "Foreground" in the Stencil tool's requester. This allows you to draw only on the background. As a variation, use stenciling some of the time, and turn it off for other tubes (see Figure 2).

Change is good?



by R. Shamms Mortier

NTSC, the TV transmission standard set by the National Television Standards Committee many years ago, is going by the wayside, and so is PAL and SECAM, alternate world TV standards. The coming Digital High Definition TV standards will replace all current TV models and their transmission standards within the next 10 to 15 years. In not too long a time, all of the TVs in use today will have to be either scrapped or expensively retrofitted to meet the new transmission standards. The new transmission standards are going to present visual data with resolutions that are much closer to today's high end RGB computers than to the smeary low resolutions offered by NTSC, PAL, and SECAM.

What this means for the Amiga and all of the other systems out of which have poured millions of NTSC regulated video material is that it too will be pretty useless. Let's face it. When you see an animation set to 72 DPI on a TV monitor, it looks far different from playback on a computer monitor. The Amiga, in order to be a viable tool around the first quarter of the twenty-first century, is going to have to be redesigned and beefed up. But you know what? With the right type of development in the coming years, the Amiga may be an easier transitional platform than other systems. The Amiga, after all, was built with TV in mind. It will be interesting at the least to see how all of this shakes out.

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4. As a final element in this first exploration, reduce the size of the brush farther, and complete a more extensive lattice, using Stenciling to protect all but the background color about 50% of the time. Having elements of different sizes tricks the eye into seeing perspectives and depth where only 2D lines exist. Figure 3 demonstrates the effect of smaller brushes.
5. Using the same group of resized brushes and random toggling of the Stencil operation in Brilliance, select the Mirror tool. The Mirror tool is to Brilliance what the Symmetry tool is in DPaint, though DPaint's Symmetry tool allows for even more variation. In Brilliance, the Mirror tool gives you either two or four clones of a brush, all grouped around a common center. You get two clones if either X or Y is used as the mirror axis, and four when both are checked. Look carefully at the mirrored graphic in Figure 4.
6. Now explore the same ideas using the outline oval and curved lines. Notice that this works best when you use random toggles of the Stenciling operation. The forms become more organic with curves. Figure 5 shows the use of curved lines and ovals.
7. The same techniques can be used to create a grainy graphic, somewhat reminiscent of grains of sand or pebbles. When you want the grains to look more like rocks, just add a black outline around the shape (hit the "o" key after selecting black in the palette). These elements are then sprayed on with the Airbrush with Mirroring on (see Figure 6).

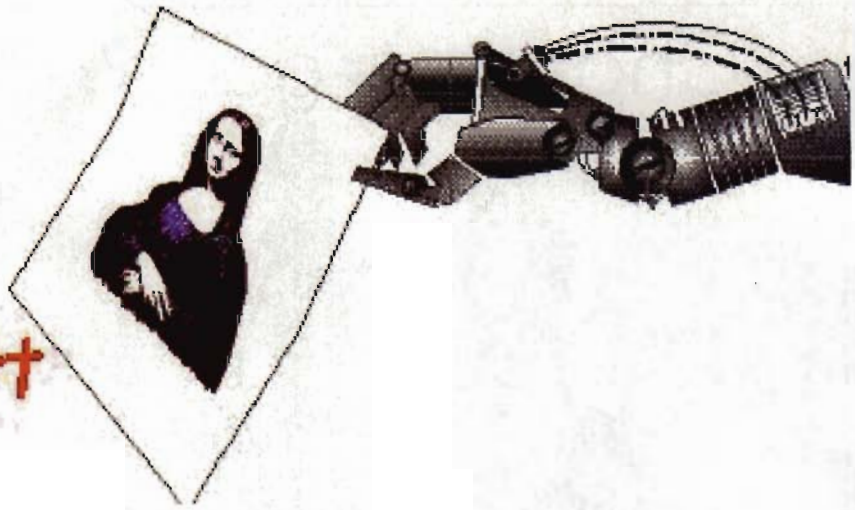
Where and how to use 2D 3D art

Providing you don't mind a little complexity, this style of artwork can work as a background for video text. Another option is to use it as a foreground in a 3D animation, allowing the background color to be transparent. It's like looking through 3D to see 3D elements in the back. You can also use it as an interesting backdrop on a Web page, or for DTP work.

Till next time, see ya in ROMulan space. Enjoy!

•AC•

Adding a "Hand Drawn" Look to Clip Art



Even if you are not a great artist, with clip art and a few quick techniques, you can produce "original" masterpieces.

by Nick Cook

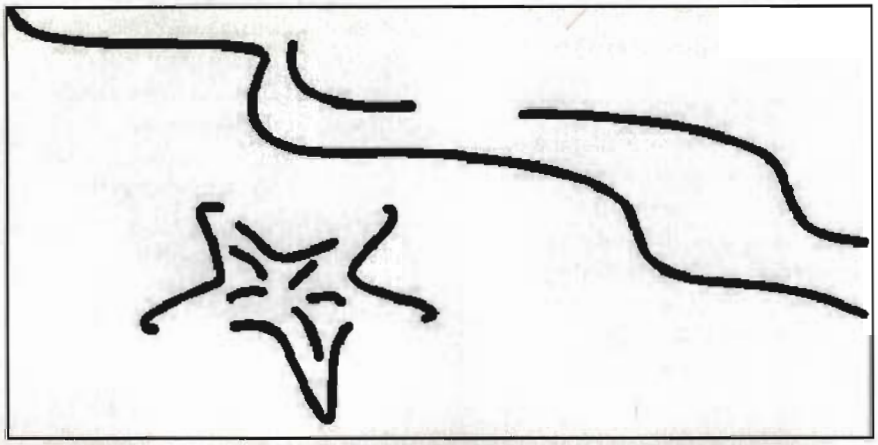




Figure 1: The example comes from Image Club's unique "Strokes & Sketches" collection.
Figure 2: You're not in kindergarten any more! You don't have to stay in the lines and color to the edge of the page.

Clip art is a boon to those of us who are, um, "Artistically challenged." There are thousands of pieces of art available in almost any style imaginable. Despite this abundance, you may still want to alter some of the clips to suit your layout. For example, you find that perfect image in a vector graphic format such as .eps or .dr2d. Although the image is right, its "feel" is not. Vector graphics can appear to be "mechanical" when you want a more "human" touch.

A tip printed in the Image Club's catalog provided a way to create a "hand drawn" clip art from an .eps image. Unfortunately, it was written for the Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop packages. Since the Amiga doesn't have those programs, we will do, it on our own.

First, convert the .eps or .dr2d image into a bitmap format. Do this by way of programs such as DrawStudio, or by opening the graphic in PageStream3 or ArtExpression and exporting the file as an IFF. Once you have gotten your IFF, we are off in Photogenics 2:

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STEP ONE: Load the image (Figure 1). Clone it (in the Project menu) or load a second copy. Make the copy the alpha channel by moving the thumbnail sketch on the image bar into the "alpha" slot, by menu commands or by keyboard shortcuts.

The alpha channel will function as a mask over the original image, like the stencil effect in DeluxePaint. This protects the black lines from paint functions, so you will not have to worry about accidently slopping "paint" all over the lines.

STEP TWO: Add color! The easiest way would be simply flood filling areas with colors. That's appropriate for some types of clip art; however, the sample we are working with has a sophisticated feel to it, so let's get artsy. Select the airbrush brush (click on the Brush icon) and color the image (Figure 2). Don't use filled shapes. Just keep applying lines of color. With Photogenics, be sure to "Fix" the image before you change colors or when the painting is finished!



Figure 3: A script font supports the hand drawn feel.

STEP THREE: Apply a light blur to the image. This blends everything, making the picture look as if it has been drawn with a felt marker (Figure 3).

Viola! What composition! What balance! What striking use of color! And what a different feel the image has when compared to the original version. Hmmm, maybe I'll stick it on the refrigerator door!

•AC•

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This Old Workbench: Episode 9

Tool Time: Beneath the Hood

A Tool of Beauty is a Joy Forever

by Dave Matthews



This episode, I am beginning a series on some powerful tools for working with your Amiga. It is time to peek under the hood. Remember, when using power tools, safety first! These programs do many strange and wonderful things, and properly used, can make your Amiga an even finer testament to modern technology. But, always make sure you read (and follow) the accompanying documentation!

As with all such power tools, blindly flailing about the interior of your Amiga can lead to unpredictable behavior, and nasty crashes, as well as feelings of fear, uncertainty and guilt.

Executive

UNIX-like process scheduler (V2.10)
Author: petrin@megabaud.fi (Petri Nordlund)
Version: 2.10
Aminet: util/misc/executive.lha
Requires: AmigaOS 2.04
Distribution: Shareware

Executive is one of the more sophisticated programs I've covered for the Amiga. This program brings UNIX-like enhanced multitasking to the Amiga. Of course, the Amiga already has one of the best multitasking operating systems around, but what Executive gives the Amiga is process scheduling.

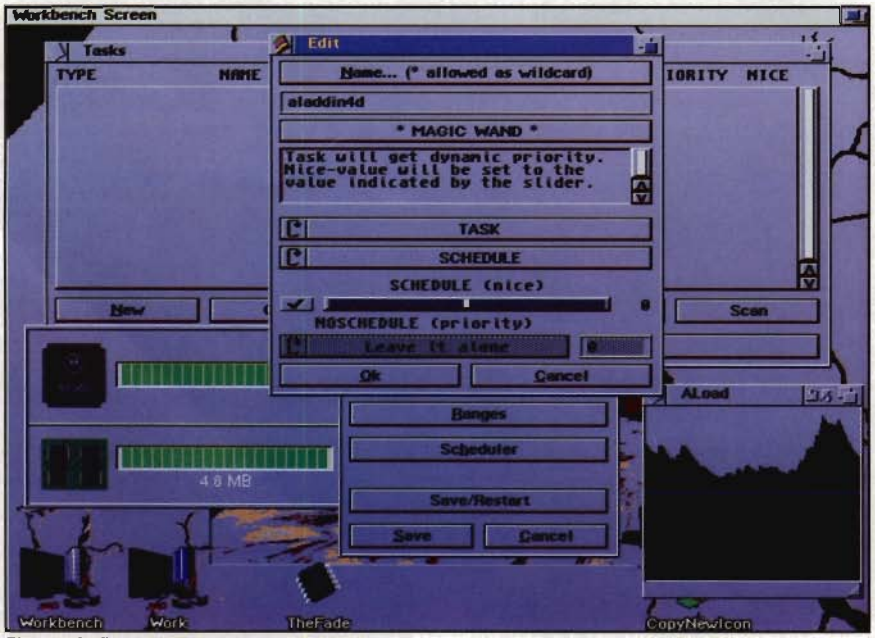


Figure 1. Executive task scheduler

Before I get to Executive, a little background on the Amiga's OS might be in order. The Amiga's system of multitasking is known as preemptive, prioritized, round-robin.

Preemptive means the OS controls the multitasking, and acts like a traffic cop, controlling the flow of the multiple programs as well as preventing conflicts and traffic jams. Because of this multitasking OS, it may seem like the Amiga is running many different programs simultaneously, but, since the Amiga is not (yet) a parallel CPU system, it really can only do one thing at a time. Because the Amiga can only use one program on the CPU at a time, when you run multiple programs on the Amiga, the OS must share the CPU between the programs. This is the round-robin part.

The OS, acting as a sort of traffic cop, lets a program run a bit, then moves permission to run to the next program, while the other programs wait. This normally happens so fast as to give the illusion of all the programs running simultaneously.

The Amiga uses a system of task priorities to control the flow of program traffic. Each program is given a priority from -127 to 127 when it is run. The higher the priority, the more

CPU usage the program gets. For most situations, this system works brilliantly, and the user never needs to mess with or even know about any program's priority. There are times, however, when more control of the situation is desired.

For instance, say you need to raytrace a large animation project, one that might take weeks of constant rendering. Because raytracing is so CPU intensive, you may find trying to run any other programs intolerably sluggish, and thus you could be without the use of your Amiga until the animation is finished rendering, for some a fate worse than death! Luckily, the Amiga does make provision for controlling this via Priority settings in the icon tool types, or the ChangeTaskPriority command. Unluckily, these are often inconvenient or ineffective.

This is where Executive comes in. Using the included scheduler to dynamically control task priorities, you can run that CPU hog of a raytracer to trace your masterpiece, and still be able to use the Amiga as if the raytracer were not running at all. Of course, to quote Heinlein- "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch!" When you use the scheduler to lower the priority of the raytracer, you are giving it less CPU time, so it will take longer to complete your picture or animation, but at least you will have a usable Amiga for the duration.

Executive uses the tried and true client/server model. The server is the main program, which normally you would start in your WBStartup drawer. Clients are programs that use and support the server, such as the task manager, and the various CPU usage, task performance display utilities.

Executive includes a system of 'genies' and 'magic wands' to make scheduling different tasks easier, and to help with those programs which do not respond well to Executive's meddling.

Executive might seem rather daunting at first, and the truth is, most beginners will find it a tough go.



Figure 2 (top). SnoopDOS looks behind the scenes.
Figure 3 (bottom). SysInspector System Information

However, the documentation for Executive includes plenty of good information, general and technical, on multitasking, scheduling, and the Amiga's OS, and also features a helpful tutorial.

Executive should prove very useful to those Amigans who do a lot of rendering, but still need to use their Amiga's for other tasks at the same time, or to those who just want more control over how their Amiga runs. See Figure 1 for a screenshot of Executive in action.

SnoopDOS

System monitor, many new features added.
Author: ecarroll@maths.tcd.ie (Eddy Carrol)
Version: 3.0
Aminet: util/moni/snoopdos30.lha
Requires: AmigaOS 2.04
Distribution: freeware

Have you ever tried to run a program, and it either crashes or just won't run at all, even though you know it ran before? Often, if a font or library was inadvertently deleted, the

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offending program will simply refuse to run or crash without giving a hint about the reason. It would be nice to look behind the scenes and see what is going on with that program.

Enter Eddy Carroll's SnoopDOS. This handy utility has been around quite awhile, and while it won't help with every problem, I have used it to track down quite a few otherwise unsolved mysteries. SnoopDOS allows you to track all sorts of system functions, including Findtask, Lockscreen, OpenDevice, OpenFont, OpenLibrary, ReadTooltypes, SendRexx and a whole slew of other esoteric happenings. While many of these may not make any sense, and may not be of all that much use to any but the expert, some, such as the OpenFont, OpenLibrary, and ReadToolType can be indispensable to help track down program problems. See Figure 2 for a screenshot of SnoopDOS.

SysInspector

System monitor, with ClassAct GUI
Author: merlin@thule.no (Eric Sauvageau)
Version: 1.1
Aminet: util/moni/SysInspector11.lha
Requires: AmigaOS 3.0+, ClassAct 2.0+, latest version of ClassAct can be found at
ftp://ftp.warped.com/pub/amiga/classact/
Distribution: Shareware

SysInspector, by the author of newIcons 3.0, is another system monitor, though with a different focus than SnoopDOS. SysInspector lets you examine much of the internal workings of your Amiga's OS, such as Assigns, Commodities, Interrupts, Libraries, message ports, tasks and processes, screens and windows and the list goes on and on.

Above and beyond just looking under the hood, you can use SysInspector to tinker with the engine, as it were. Close orphaned windows left by crashed programs, selectively flush memory, send the break signal to programs, change a program priority, and more. See Figure 3 for SysInspector.

SysSpeed

Amiga System Speed Tester
Author: Torsten Bach
Version: 2.31
Aminet: util/moni/SSpd231.lha
Requires: AmigaOS 2.04, MUI 3.0+ (avail: util/libs/mui38usr.lha)
Distribution: freeware

Finally, when asked how fast my computer is, I normally respond, not fast enough! However, sometimes, a less vague answer might be helpful. SysSpeed is a program designed to test your Amiga's speed, and compare it against other Amigas. This will give you some idea of your Amiga's relative standing speedwise.

SysSpeed has various methods of calculating speed, including memory, drive, intuition (drawing windows and screens, etc.), graphics and others. It also has several 'real world' tests, using ADPro, CygnusED and other Amiga applications. See Figure four for SysSpeeds results on my 1200 68030@28MHz.

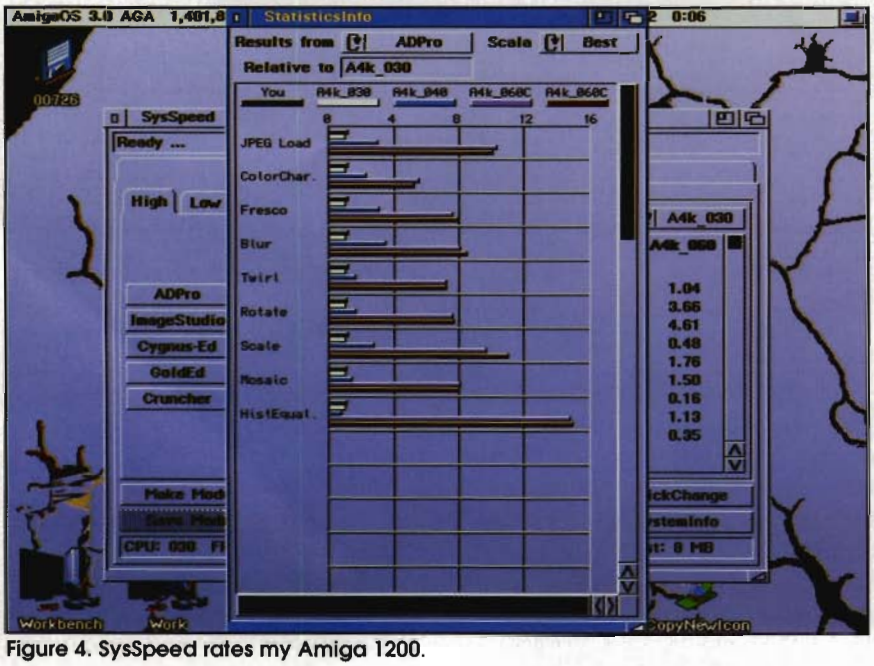


Figure 4. SysSpeed rates my Amiga 1200.

Tooled Out

Well, that's it for this episode, but there are loads of Amiga tools I haven't gotten to yet, so stay tuned. And, as always, feel free to write me c/o Amazing Computing or via email: dm05438@navix.net

•AC•

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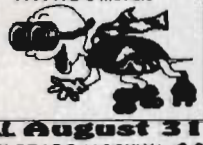
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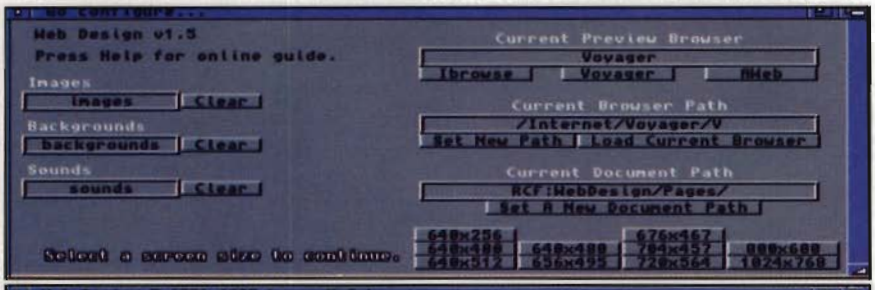
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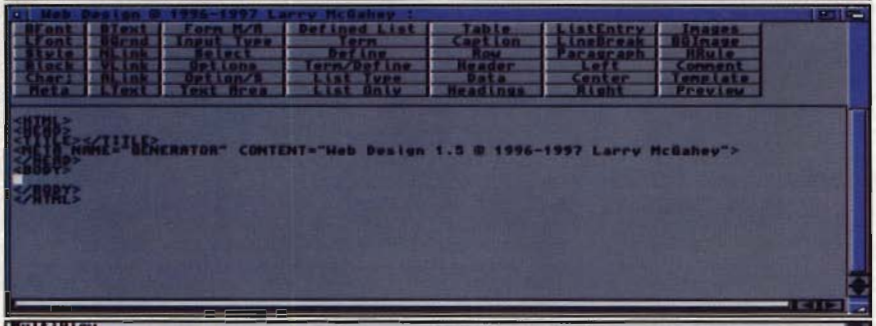
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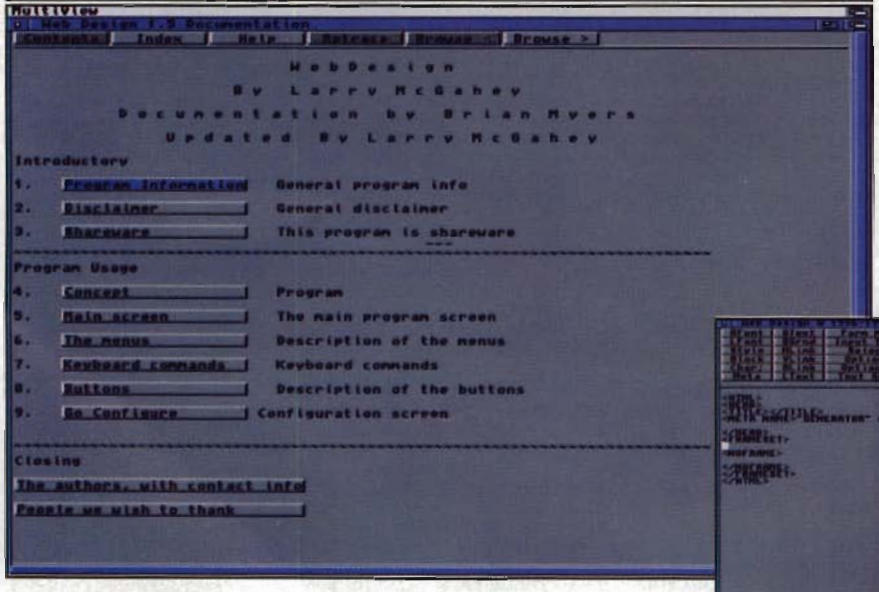
WebDesign: A Review

Need to layout a new web page? If you know HTML and just want a little help in your format, WebDesign is a shareware program you should see.

by Randy Finch







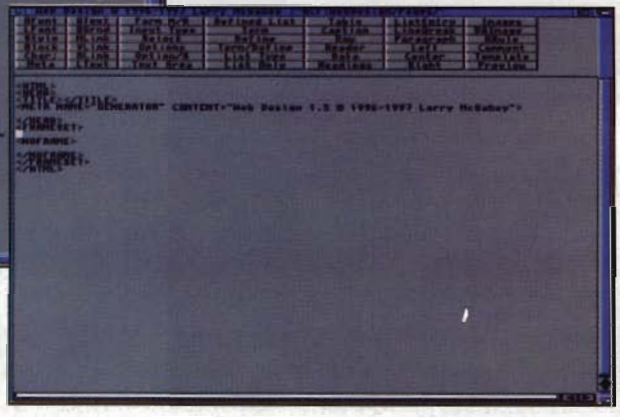


Figure 1 (top). The Initial "Go Configure" Window
Figure 2 (middle). The WebDesign User Interface
Figure 3 (bottom). The Contents Page of the AmigaGuide Help File
Figure 4 (right). The Frame Template Code

Having written a ten-part series of articles on creating Web pages using HTML for Amazing Computing, I was asked to review programs now available for the Amiga that assists in this task. I will begin with a shareware product called WebDesign .

WebDesign's Background

WebDesign was written by Larry McGahey with the CanDo authoring tool. The program is shareware with a recommended fee of $25. A fully functional version of the program can be downloaded from Larry's Web site at http://www.net-link.net/~lmcgahey. Just before I began writing this review, I found out that Larry had released version 1.5 of WebDesign. I downloaded and installed the new version. This article covers version 1.5.

Installation and Execution

Installing WebDesign could not be easier. Just create a directory where you want the program to reside and extract the program files from the

LHA archive file. The program files take up about 700 KB of disk space.

Once the files in the LHA file have been extracted, just navigate, via Workbench, to the directory where WebDesign is located. Double-click the program icon and you are on your way.

Configuration

Upon executing WebDesign, the "Go Configure" window appears as shown in Figure 1. This window allows some global settings to be specified. On the right, you specify the browser you use and its location on your hard disk. In the lower right corner, you specify the name of the directory where all of the Web pages you design will be saved. Along the left side, you enter the names of the subdirectories where images, backgrounds, and sounds will be stored. These subdirectories should be located in the directory where the pages will be saved.

Once all of the settings have been entered, click on a button in the lower right corner to specify the size of the window that WebDesign will use. You will then be transported to the program proper.

Program Interface

The program interface is shown in Figure 2. It consists of drop-down menus, buttons, and an editor window. The code you see in Figure 2 is automatically placed there to get you started with some of the basic tags that all HTML files should have. If you need to start over with a fresh template, delete all the code and press the Template button.

Code Generation

Code can be added to the WebDesign editor window in several ways:

1. Entered via the keyboard.
2. Inserted or appended from a file.
3. Automatically generated by selecting menu items and buttons.

Many editors let you type text and insert other files. What makes WebDesign different is its ability to insert proper HTML code into the document based on a menu selection or a button click. Therefore, this is the area I will concentrate on for this review.

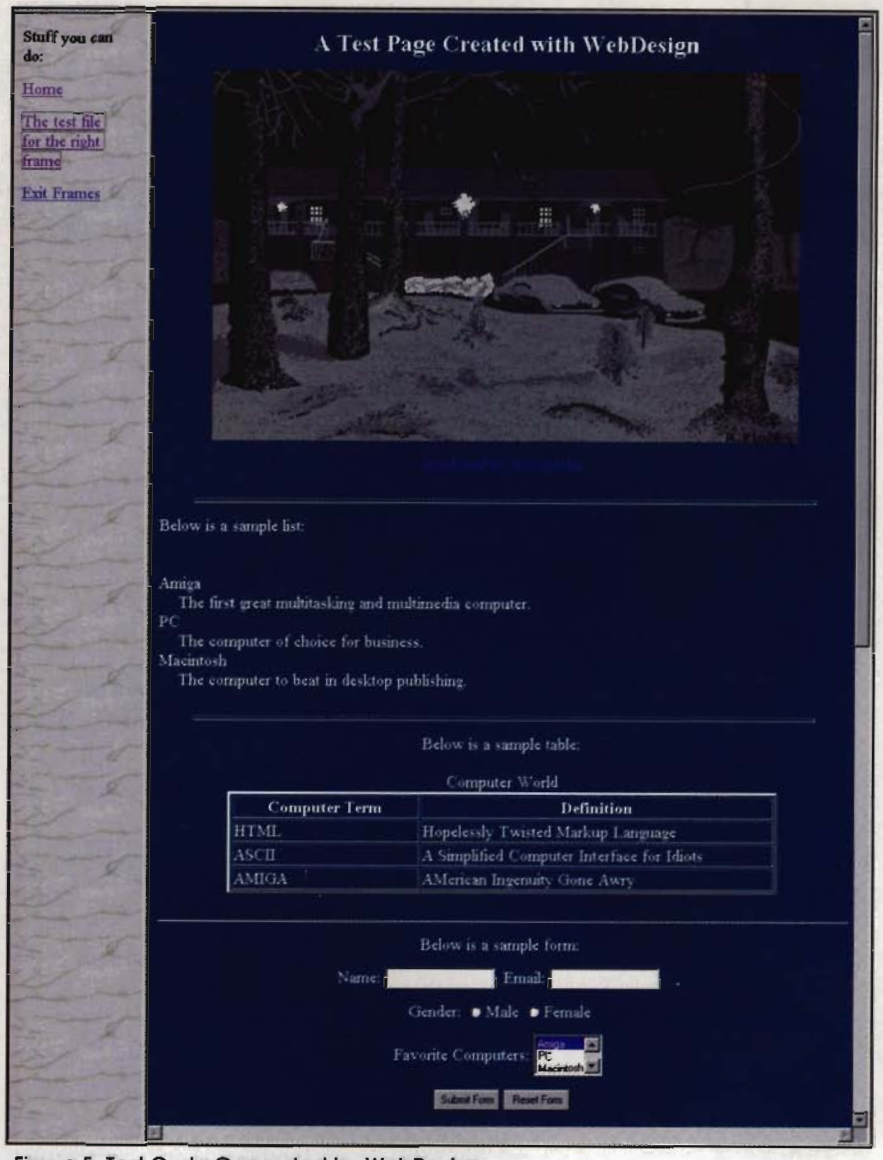


Figure 5. Test Code Generated by WebDesign

WebDesign normally inserts code wherever the cursor is currently located. However, WebDesign also has what I call the auto-insert-where-relevant feature. If the code about to be inserted does not belong at the cursor position, it is inserted where it makes sense. For example, if you choose the NLINK button, which lets you set the color of hyperlink text in the document, the appropriate attribute code is inserted inside the <BODY> tag because this is the place the attribute makes sense. This happens regardless of the cursor position.

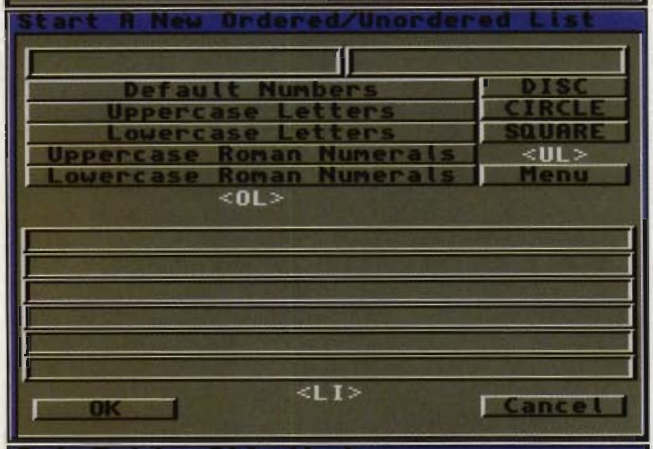
If that's not enough, then how about this. If you choose NLINK again and set a different color, WebDesign will replace the existing attribute with the new one rather than leave you with duplicate code.

If you mistakenly add code to the wrong location in the document, never fear. WebDesign has the ability to cut and paste text.

Tags "R" Us

WebDesign has the ability to auto-insert many different HTML tags. Some of these include the old standards like paragraphs, breaks, special characters, horizontal rules, anchors, links, lists, etc. There are also some more advanced features such as relative font size, forms, tables, frames,









From Top to Bottom:
Figure 6. Requester for Generating a Full URL Link
Figure 7. Requester for Creating an Ordered or Unordered List
Figure 8. Requester for Creating a Table
Figure 9. Requester for Defining a Frame

Listing 1.
Program to Create Frames - wdframes.html

```
<HTML>

<HEAD>
<TITLE>WebDesign Test Page</TITLE>
<META NAME="GENERATOR" CONTENT="Web Design 1.5 © 1996-1997 Larry McGahey">
<META NAME="AUTHOR" CONTENT="Randy Finch">
</HEAD>

<FRAMESET COLS="100,*">
<FRAME SRC="wdleft.html" NAME="left" TARGET="_top">
<FRAME SRC="wdright.html" NAME="right" TARGET="_top" SCROLLING="YES">

<NOFRAME>

<CENTER><BIG>WebDesign Test Page</BIG><BR CLEAR=ALL></CENTER>
<HR SIZE=3 WIDTH=90 ALIGN=CENTER>

<P ALIGN=CENTER>
Shame on you! Why haven't you upgraded to a browser that supports frames?
You won't be able to really see what this page does until you do.
</P>

</NOFRAME>

</FRAMESET>

</HTML>
```

Listing 2.
HTML Code for Left Frame - wdleft.html

```
<HTML>

<HEAD>
<TITLE></TITLE>
<META NAME="GENERATOR" CONTENT="Web Design 1.5 © 1996-1997 Larry McGahey">
</HEAD>

<BODY BACKGROUND="../backgrounds/Cotton.jpg">

Stuff you can do:<BR>
<BR>
<A HREF="../home.html" TARGET="right">Home</A><P>
<A HREF="wdright.html" TARGET="right">The test file for the right frame</A><P>
<P>
<A HREF="../home.html" TARGET="_top">Exit Frames</A>

</BODY>

</HTML>
```

etc. Among some of the newer features of HTML supported by WebDesign are marquees, banners, background sound, embedded sound, and the META tag.

In some cases, when a menu or button is selected, the beginning and ending HTML tags are inserted into the document. In other cases, a requester appears on the screen and awaits further input. Once the information is entered and the Okay button is pressed, all relevant tags and attributes are inserted into the code window in one fell swoop.

Help

There are so many tags and attributes available in HTML that even an expert programmer can forget a few from time to time. The same goes for WebDesign's interface. There are so many menu items and buttons, you may forget what some of them do. If this happens, just press the Help key and an AmigaGuide help file will appear.

The contents page is shown in Figure 3. The help file is a bit sparse, but it seems to cover the essentials. Information is available for each button and menu on the program interface. There is general information about the program as well as contact information. Some of the information in the help file had not been updated from previous releases, but nothing significant. You can still use the program while the help file is being displayed.

Driving WebDesign

Obviously, there are far too many features in WebDesign for me to discuss them in detail. Therefore, I decided to take the program for a test drive by creating some pages. I decided to create a main page consisting of two frames and then produce one rather simple page for the left frame and a more complex one for the right frame.

Listing 1 shows the code generated by WebDesign for a FRAMESET consisting of two FRAMEs. Remember, when

Listing 3.

HTML Code for Right Frame - wdright.html

```
<HTML>

<HEAD>
<TITLE></TITLE>
<META NAME="GENERATOR" CONTENT="Web Design 1.5 © 1996-1997 Larry McGahey">
</HEAD>

<BODY TEXT="#FFFFFF" BGCOLOR="#00415C">

<H2 ALIGN=CENTER>A Test Page Created with WebDesign</H2>
<CENTER>
<IMG SRC="../media/winthavn.jpg" ALIGN=MIDDLE ALT="Test Picture">
<P>
<A HREF="mailto:rcfinch@hiwaay.net">Send mail to Webmaster</A>
</CENTER>
<P>
<HR SIZE=5 WIDTH=90% ALIGN=CENTER>
<P>

Below is a sample list:
<P>
<DL>
<DT>Amiga
<DD>The first great multitasking and multimedia computer.
<DT>PC
<DD>The computer of choice for business.
<DT>Macintosh
<DD>The computer to beat in desktop publishing.
</DL>
<P>
<HR SIZE=5 WIDTH=90% ALIGN=CENTER>

<P ALIGN=CENTER>
Below is a sample table:
<P>
<CENTER>
<TABLE ALIGN=CENTER WIDTH=80% BORDER=3>
<CAPTION ALIGN=TOP>Computer World</CAPTION>
<TR VALIGN=MIDDLE>
<TH ALIGN=CENTER>Computer Term</TH>
<TH ALIGN=CENTER>Definition</TH>
</TR>
<TR VALIGN=MIDDLE>
<TD ALIGN=LEFT>HTML</TD>
<TD ALIGN=LEFT>Hopelessly Twisted Markup Language</TD>
</TR>
<TR VALIGN=MIDDLE>
<TD ALIGN=LEFT>ASCII</TD>
<TD ALIGN=LEFT>A Simplified Computer Interface for Idiots</TD>
</TR>
<TR VALIGN=MIDDLE>
<TD ALIGN=LEFT>AMIGA</TD>
<TD ALIGN=LEFT>AMerican Ingenuity Gone Awry</TD>
</TR>
</TABLE>
</CENTER>

<P>
<HR>
<P ALIGN=CENTER>

Below is a sample form:
<P>
<FORM METHOD="POST" ACTION="../cgi-bin/nothing.cgi">
<CENTER>
Name: <INPUT TYPE="TEXT" NAME="Name" SIZE="20" MAXLENGTH="20">
Email: <INPUT TYPE="TEXT" NAME="Email" SIZE="20" MAXLENGTH="20">
<P>
Gender: <INPUT TYPE="RADIO" NAME="Gender">Male
        <INPUT TYPE="RADIO" NAME="Gender">Female
<P>
Favorite Computers:
<SELECT NAME="Computer" MULTIPLE SIZE="3">
<OPTION>Amiga
<OPTION>PC
<OPTION>Macintosh
<OPTION>SGI
<OPTION>DEC Alpha
<OPTION>Sun
<OPTION>Other
</SELECT>
<P>
<INPUT TYPE="SUBMIT" NAME="submit" VALUE="Submit Form">
<INPUT TYPE="RESET" NAME="reset" VALUE="Reset Form">
</FORM>
</CENTER>

</BODY>

</HTML>
```

using frames, the FRAMESET tag replaces the BODY tag in the HTML code. Fortunately, WebDesign has the ability to start you off with a frame template rather than a standard template. Just delete everything in the code window and select the menu item Frames/Frame Template. The code shown in Figure 4 is inserted into the code window. At this point the code for the frames needs to be inserted. Also, if you want to gracefully handle browsers that do not support frames, code can be added between the NOFRAME and / NOFRAME tags.

Listing 2 shows the code that is displayed in the left frame, and Listing 3 shows the code that is displayed in the right frame. Figure 5 shows how all of this looks in a browser.

As I mentioned earlier, WebDesign sometimes displays a requester, seeking additional information before inserting code into the document. Figures 6, 7, 8, and 9 give you a flavor of how some of these look. The captions explain what you are looking at.

Complaints

WebDesign 1.5 is quite stable. There is one situation under which the program bombs and takes you back to the Workbench. This occurs when pressing the Cancel button on the file requester that appears after selecting the Add Address to List button in the Full URL htp (Figure 6) and Local URL requesters.

A minor source of irritation was the fact that I could not specify a TARGET attribute when creating hypertext links. This would be nice to have when creating links that work within frames.

When using the arrow keys to move through the code, the cursor was very sluggish. If you need to move a distance through the file, it is better to just click at the new location.

Conclusions

Obviously, it is a great advantage to have a prior understanding of HTML coding when using WebDesign. Having started my HTML coding with just an editor, I like the control I get using a program like WebDesign. However, if you don't know HTML and don't care to learn it, you might want to try something different.

If you would like to check out the pages I designed with WebDesign, point your browser to: http://fly.hiwaay.net/~rcfinch/webdesign/wdframes.html.

Let me know how you like them.

•AC•

WebDesign
Larry McGahey
6092 N 8th Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
lmcgahey@net-link.net
http://www.net-link.net/~lmcgahey http://www.net-link.net/webdesign
Shareware: $25.00

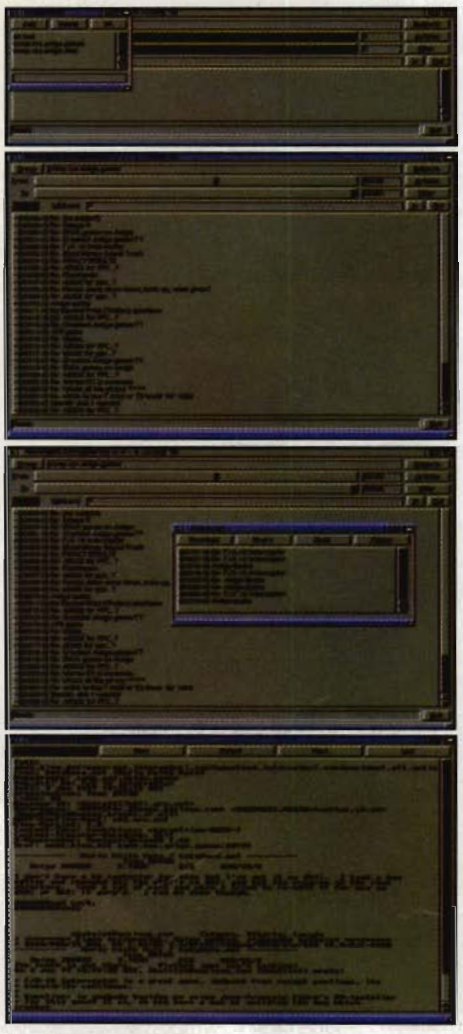
on line

by Rob Hays

amiga telecommunications



Java for the Amiga, additional news agents, and more.



From Top to Bottom:
Figure1: The NewsAgent main window and Group Picker window.
Figure2: Click a subject to tag it for retrieval.
Figure3: Today's reading list.
Figure4: The Article Reader window.

This month, more news programs, more news, and more updates. These may be the "dog days" of summer, but you'd never know it from all of the activity in Amiga-land. So much to talk about, so little time.

NewsAgent

We begin this month with another newsreader program, NewsAgent, from Jason G. Doig. After unpacking the archive, use the included Installer script to copy the files to your chosen directory.

Because NewsAgent is intended to be used with AmiTCP and I use Miami, I had to add a couple of ASSIGN statements to my s:user-startup script. Assign the volumes UUSPOOL: and UULIB: to the directory where you installed NewsAgent, and things will work properly.

When connected to your ISP, start the program and the main window will open. Click the "Group" button, and an editable listview opens (Figure 1). Here you can enter the name of your favorite newsgroups. Double click the name of the group you wish to retrieve the headers for, and the display will change to (Figure 2), showing the available topics. Single click the ones that interest you to 'tag' them (notice the small "+"'s along the left edge). When this is finished you end up with a list of articles (Figure 3) to then read, download, treat as a binary file, or delete. Reading opens another window (Figure 4), with its own options.

NewsAgent is currently at version 1.4, and is shareware, with a fee of $US20 requested. Requirements are AmigaOS 2.04+, and AmiTCP 2.2+ (or similar). The documentation is in AmigaGuide format. The file NewsAgent14.lha can be found in the comm/tcp subdirectory of your favorite AmiNet mirror site, and is 51,013 bytes in size.

WorldNews

From Danny Y. Wong, author of AirMail comes WorldNews. Although still in beta stage, the current version 0.75 is certainly stable enough for normal use. After unpacking the distribution archive, installing the program and starting it, you will see a deceptively simple-looking window (Figure 5). Click on the "Prefs" button to set up the usual newsreader requirements—things like your NNTP server name, user name and password.

After retrieving the available newsgroups from your server, WorldNews organizes them into an alphabetical list. A triple listview gadget opens (Figure 6). Click a letter in the left side, and all of the available newsgroups whose names begin with that letter appear in the center

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GARNERVILLE, NY 10923

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window (Figure 7). To subscribe to a group, drag its name from the center window into the right hand window (Figure 8).

When you have selected the groups that interest you, save the list with a representative name. WorldNews allows you to have multiple sets of lists, so you can separate your newsgroup interests into logical groups. Opening one of these groups displays the newsgroups selected for this group, and causes WorldNews to get the number of available articles from your server (Figure 9). Retrieving the article headers and the articles themselves is a matter of a couple of mouse clicks (Figure 10).

As I said above, this is a beta version of a forthcoming program, with minimal documentation, but has been very well behaved on my computer. Go to the Toysoft homepage to download the latest version to try for yourself: http://www.spots.ab.ca/~toysoft

While you are there, check out Danny's other programs, including new versions of his AirMail e-mail program.

Updates

VoyagerNG, MicrodotII, and AWebII all have been updated. But the big news could be on the horizon. We are being promised JAVA for the Amiga.

VoyagerNG & MicrodotII

VoyagerNG has been updated to version 2.88, with a previously removed version for advanced CPU's fixed and returned to the archive. Programmer Oliver Wagner in addition to working on VoyagerNG (hints about version 3.0 are starting to be dropped), has been updating his German-only news and mail program, called MicrodotII. Currently at version 0.182, he asks that this version not be reviewed, so while you are at the Vapor site getting the latest Voyager, grab the most recent version of MicroDotII to try. I think you will like it a lot. The URL for Vapor is:
http://www.vapor.com

Left: Fom Top to Bottom:
igure5: The WorldNews main interface.
Figure6: NewsGroups A-Z.
Figure7: C for "comp.sys.amiga.#?".
Figure8: Drag your favorites to the right window.
Figure9: Your own personal group of NewsGroups.
Figure10: The topics (center) and a single article (bottom).

AWebII

AWebII, from Amitrix is about to get a major update. Version 3.0 is to be released soon, adding support for frames, better "cookie" control, and new versatility in handling plug-ins. For the latest, check the homepage at:
http://www.amitrix.com/aweb.html

Java

Developed by Sun Microsystems to be a platform independent programming language, Java has found its first uses on the Internet in thousands of Web sites. Small Java programs, called "applets" download with a Web page, then run on the home system. These programs can be as simple as an animation, or as complex as a database. Up until now the Amiga has been left out of the Java rush, but that is about to change.

Haage & Partner, a German Amiga software development company, has been working on the first Amiga implementation of Java (Figure 11) . They are expecting to release the first version about the time you read this. This should be a big boon to Amiga Browsers; no longer will we be locked out of Web sites that depend on Java. This also should appear just as several major software packages written in Java start hitting the market. Like to see Corel Wordperfect Suite running on your Amiga? Stay tuned.

For the latest updates, check the Haage & Partner site at:
http://www.haage-partner.com

Hotlist of the Month

If you do any work with the CanDo authoring program, be sure to check out the following site from Carlos J. Velazquez (Figure 12). He tells me that as far as he knows, this is the only site in the world devoted to CanDo. Lots of articles, reviews, downloadable programs with the

Orders: (800) 735-2633
RMA: (408) 624-5879
Tech & Info: (408) 626-2633
Fax: (408) 625-6588

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Email: sales@visionsoft.com
Homepage: http://www.visionsoft.com

Visit VisionSoft's Web Site to obtain the latest pricing, product information, technical tips and hot news in the Amiga community

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1x9-70ns Simm	28.95
4x8-70ns Simm	34.95
4x9-70ns Simm	39.95
72-pin SIMM Special	
1x32-60ns Simm (4mb)	29.00
1x36-70ns Simm (4mb)	29.00
2x32-60ns Simm (8mb)	49.00
4x32-60ns Simm (16mb)	89.00
8x32-60ns Simm (32mb)	189.00
16x32-60ns Simm (64mb)	459.00
DRAM Special	
1x4-70ns SC Zip	9.95
1x4-70ns Page Zip	9.95
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Quantum 3.5" 4.5gb SCSI	989.95
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Alien Breed 3D II AGA	**24.95**
Aminet 15-18	17.95
Aminet Set 3	32.00
Aminet Set 4	**35.00**
Amiga Developer CD 1.1	17.95
AmiTCP V. 4.3	87.95
AWeb-II V. 2.1	42.95
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Deep Core CD32	9.95
Defender of Crown II CD32	9.95
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Design Works 2.0	24.95
D/Generation CD32	9.95
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Draw Studio 1.1 CD	**155.00**
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GP FAX	47.95
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Microcosm CD32	9.95
Nemac IV CD	**29.95**
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3.1 Rom for A5/600/2000	**42.95**
3.1 Rom for A12/30/4000	**57.95**
8372A 1mb Agnus	34.95
8375 1mb Agnus (318069-17)	19.95
8372B 2mb Agnus (A3000)	39.95
8373 Super Denise	29.95
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5719 Gary	13.95
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8520 Surface Mount	23.50
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Guru ROM V.6 (A530)	70.95
Guru ROM V.6	62.95
A2620-30 ROM Rev. 7	29.95
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AS 320 3.1 Kit for A500/600/2000/2500	**89.95**
AS 312/330/340 3.1 Kit for A1200/3000(T)/4000	**104.95**
Software & Manuals Only	56.95

All upgrade kits include Manuals, Software and Kickstart Rom(s).

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A500/2000 880K Int Floppy	49.95
A500/1200 Power Supply	35.95
A2000 Power Supply	99.00
A500 Keyboard	49.95
A2/3/4000 Keyboard	**74.50**
SafeSkin for A12/20/30/4000	19.95
Keyboard Adapter	9.95
A2000 KB to A4000 System	
A4000 KB to A2/3000 System	
KB-10 PC Keyboard Adapter	39.95
15-23 Pin Monitor Adapter	24.95
A520 Adapter w/ Cable	**15.95**
MidiGold 500 (Midiinterface)	29.95
External CD ROM Dr Case	59.95
SCSI Tower Case 2HH/1FH	159.95
SCSI Tower Case 4HH/2FH	219.95
DataFlyer 500 SCSI (Ref.)	**129.00**
DataFlyer A2/3000 SCSI	84.95
DataFlyer 1200 SCSI+	79.00
Baseboard 1200 Clock	13.95
GVP DSS8+ Software Udgd.	27.95
GVP Impact HD8+ (Ref.)	**189.00**
CBM A2091 SCSI (Ref.)	99.00

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Education Platinum CD	6.95
Encyclopedia 5.0 CD	9.95
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Mavis Beacon Typing 2.0	9.95
MPC Wizard 2.0 CD	6.95
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UNIX Power Tools CD	9.95
Using WWW w/Mosaic CD	9.95
Wing Commander Deluxe CD	9.95

Hot Items

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A1200 1240/33mhz	319.00
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A2000 2030/50mhz SCSI 2 + 68882 FPU	299.00
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A3000 3060/50mhz SCSI 2	709.00
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Phase 5

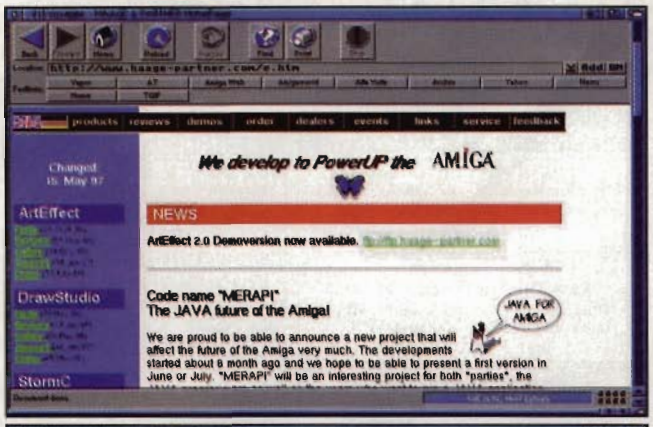
CyberVision 64 3D 4Meg	**279.00**
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CyberStorm Mark II 040	509.00
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From Top to Bottom:
Figure 11: Java and more, from Haage & Partner. Figure 12: The CanDo Corner. Figure 13: Games and more. Figure 14: Good News!

Amiga Developers, User Groups, & Dealers DO IT NOW

We need your latest information to complete the long awaited AC's GUIDE. If you are an Amiga developer or dealer, please copy the form on the next page and complete it for each product and service you provide. If you are an Amiga User Group, please complete the same form and describe when and where your group meets, what areas you cover and any other pertinent information. Please complete the form and mail or fax it to the address listed.

Only with your help, can we be certain your products, services, and organizations are included in this valuable resource.

source code, and more. The URL is:
http://www.tfs.net/~augkc/corner.html

On the other hand, if you need some hints or outright cheats to get over the rough spots in that game that has you stuck, Eddie Ivanov may have the site you have been looking for (Figure 13). Check out:
http://www.tfs.net/~eivanov

Lastly, I found this Eric Schwartz picture on the Haage & Partner site that pretty much sums up the hopeful optimism most Amiga users seem to have concerning the sale to Gateway 2000 (Figure 14).

Where To Find Me

rhays@kiva.net
http://www.kiva.net/~rhays
rhays@amigazone.com
R.Hays5 on Genie
72764,2066 on CompuServe
For U.S.Mail:
Rob Hays
P.O.Box 194
Bloomington, IN 47402
Please include a SASE if you need a personal reply.

If you run an Amiga specific BBS, send me the information callers will need to access your system. Phone number(s), modem speeds, software settings, etc. As a service to the Amiga community I will include the information I receive in this column from time to time.

If you come across any World Wide Web sites you feel would be of interest to the Amiga community, pass them along for inclusion in the HotList of the Month. Send the info to any of my addresses above.

That's all for now. See you on line!

•AC•

AC's GUIDE/AMIGA

Vendor/Product Registration

☐ Check here if you are a new vendor or group.

Please make as many copies of this form as needed.
Include a separate form for each product to be listed.
Please type or print clearly.

Please check one:
☐ New Product Listing
☐ Updated Product Listing

Vendor Information: (please be sure that company name is complete and accurate—watch use of caps)

Company Name			
Address			
City	State	Zip Code	Country
Phone1	FAX	email	
Contact Person	Web Site address:		

Product Information: (please be sure that product name is complete and accurate—watch use of caps)

Product Name
Product Category (see back of form)
Version Information
Suggested Retail Price (in U.S. dollars)
If Affiliate Label, name affiliate
Availability (when?)

Localization: Display (NTSC/PAL) / National Keyboards / Foreign Language Support / Foreign Distribution

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GAMES ON THE AMIGA

By Peter Olafson



Figure 2. Tiny Troops—65 battles on a Micro Machines-style landscape.

Vulcan Software has had some hits and some misses, but they have kept swinging for the Amiga.

Who would have guessed it? About three and a half years ago, right on the cusp of Commodore's collapse, England's tiny Vulcan Software Ltd. released a top-down puzzle/adventure called Valhalla & the Lord of Infinity. It was at once artful, simple and charming—who could resist a character who looked guilelessly up out of the playfield and squeaked at you in the tiniest of voices?—and it quickly won my heart.

A second Valhalla (Before the War), very like the first, followed on its heels, and based on that title, and the games that followed, Vulcan quickly established a reputation for cute characters, rational hard-disk installation routines, tidy little manuals, reasonable prices, and economical packaging (without the huge ratio of dead air-to-product in so many IBM games).

All around them, game publishers were postponing and abandoning their planned Amiga releases — wait and see was the word of the day — and Vulcan could surely have been forgiven had it joined in the waiting game. But, it seems being at the right place at the wrong time isn't necessarily a bad thing. For, in mid-1997, Vulcan is not only still around, but the most prolific Amiga game publisher, with 10 games on the racks (where racks can be found) and at least a dozen in the hopper. Based on early looks at some of those titles — like Hell Pigs (Figure 1) — there's every indication the best is yet to come.

At the same time, there have been signs of growing pains. Diversification is a natural offshoot of success, but it has accompanying risks. When a publisher moves away from things on which it made its bones — in this case, the Valhallas — the possibility for slips increases. And, sure enough, a look at Vulcan's recent output suggests that, as it has grown prolific, it has lost some of its keen edge. This issue, we'll look back over a few of Vulcan's releases since Valhalla 2.



Figure 1. An early look at one of Vulcan's games in progress, Hell Pigs .

Bograts

The concept's nice: an amiable spin on games like Lemmings and Troddlers. You're Mama Bograt, and, by throwing levers, bouncing on springs and collecting the stuff of life, you're trying to guide your two offspring safely to level exits while collecting any eggs you happen to find along the way.

The 60 levels are cleverly laid out — even No. 3 will keep you busy for a while — and you'll have to make good use of the scrolling map mode and power-ups (like bombs) to plot a path for the young'uns. But, the execution is somewhat lacking, and I never quite connected with the game. The frog-like characters don't have any real appeal. The graphics are rather broadly drawn. The effects sound corrupted. There is no way to restart a level except by restoring a save. And considering you have to pay for the privilege of saving, that doesn't seem quite fair,

Burnout

I'm reminded of a gold-plated doorstop. It may look nice sitting there on the floor next to the door, but what's the point, please?

Burnout is the simplest of games: a demolition derby. Bump your three opponents until they explode or fall off

the playfield. You earn points and cash depending on how long you last, and the cash can be invested in car upgrades at a shop.

Here's the gold: The tracks and high-gloss cars look sumptuous. It's the first high-spec commercial game — Burnout requires AGA, 6 MB of RAM and a hard disk — rather than one corseted to run on a 1 MB A500. And, yes, it's nice to be able to play with three other people (using a parallel-port adaptor) and to add extra arenas and cars.

But the reality is that the game itself is dull. The playfield is one screen only, and the vehicles relatively large, so the possibilities for strategy and maneuver are limited. (Every game effectively turns into a boxing match.) The effects aren't up to the level of the background graphics, so there's no sense of pay-off when you win; it's as mundane as losing. And the would-be commercial arena and car data disks — now available free for the downloading — don't add much.

This is also a case in which Vulcan could have used a conventional hard-disk installation program. Manually copying over the archives from the seven disks and then manually decompressing them is a bit much. In fact, five minutes with Burnout is a bit much.

Hillsea Lido

Now this is nice. It's a sort of Theme Park Lite in which you adorn beach and boardwalk with the machinery of capitalism: postcard and ice cream stands, boat rentals and so on. And keep them well-supplied, clean and well-lighted — lest you be issued a summons. And hire workers. And place ads. And hire an act for the theater for Sunday night.

The key: It's manageable. Even in its simplest mode, Theme Park was so hands-on that there wasn't much time to just kick back and enjoy your creation without looking over your shoulder. Hillsea always leaves room for that pleasure. You even get to go to see the show.

Jet Pilot

True, there was Tornado AGA and Fighter Duel Pro 2. And DiD's TFX still lingers unreleased. But the Amiga has had very few full-bore, high-spec flight sims.

Add another to the list: Jet Pilot is very much a full-bore, high-spec flight sim. I suspect a lot of flight-sim devotees have skipped to other platforms — flight sims thrive on raw processor power — but those who remain are in for a proper treat. Jet Pilot provides in the neighborhood of 80 missions, 27 European airfields, handsome (if rather angular) scenery from a wide range of perspectives, a spectacular level of configurability and, with detail knocked down, a fluid 25 frames-per-second update. (To my thinking, the most striking feature is the presence of other air traffic and the detailed to and fro of radio communications.)

The problem is that it's really, *really* high-spec. Like most of Vulcan's games, it will run on a basic system, but you will get the most out of it only on the fastest ones. (At full detail on an 060/50 A1200, I was getting an update of between 7 and 8 frames per second.) Also, why no cool crash scene? And why no real manual? While I like the Big Little Book approach that Vulcan has adopted for docs, as well as Jet Pilot's readable on-line guide, it needs a proper book. (The size of the box shouldn't determine a product's design.)

Timekeepers

This Valhalla spin-off — it uses a variation on the original Valhalla's game engine — put me a little in mind of Dongleware's great puzzler, Oxyd, and I can't think of higher praise.

It finds you sheperding 14 blank-faced cops — they look like potatoes — through a treacherous past in search of hidden nuclear bombs. The twist is that they are not under your direct control; you have to instruct them by laying down direction and task markers (jump, operate, beat on) in their twisted path. And quickly, please, because there be lava and worse out there. (To say nothing of the traffic jams you can create.) It's too addictive to easily put down. And if you do somehow manage to finish, a solid data disk awaits.

Tiny Troops

This one has a pre-Vulcan history: The animated strategy game was originally developed for release by Mindscape UK. Mindscape never got around to releasing a lot of its later Amiga games — remember MegaRace and Evasive Action? — but Tiny Troops survived.

And, by and large, we should be happy it did. It's a little like Dune II, only the Sim City construction element excised and the 65 battles played out over a Micro Machines-style landscape (Figure 2). You teleport your cute little troopers in and send 'em off, in a formation of your choosing, to do battle with other cute little troopers. (You can play as either the Klutes or the Furfurians.) Bear in mind, it's rather airy in tone — more like a battle of garden bugs than grim Arrakis — and it doesn't have the depth that made Dune II so addictive. (TT doesn't have scenarios; it has battles.)

But once you get a handle on the slightly arcane control system, it's fun, and, the farther you get into the game, the more fun it becomes. That's always a good sign.

Valhalla & the Fortress of Eve

Now, what happened here? If it ain't broke, don't fix it, and the Valhalla series was most assuredly not broken.

Traces of the old charm does linger. The squeaky voices, the infernal puzzles, the giant, rambling levels that sent you hither and thither.

But, for some reason, Valhalla 3 has acquired an angled-down point-of-view in place of the original top-down one. I suppose change is healthy. And yet, in the process, something's happened to the game's basic appeal. (It seems vaguely cluttered.) I felt like a kid coming home from college who discovers his bedroom had been turned into a storage closet. Mommmm!

•AC•

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Translucent Shapes, The Amiga user has several options when it comes to displaying text over graphics. Nick walks us through a few of them, by Nick Cook.
How to Organize Your Life, A few helpful hints to organize your work life and define your goals that work as well for a video producer or an average, overworked, under-funded, Amigan, by Steve Yankee.
The Gateway Computer Show, An Amiga User group of 32 people bring together a computer show that attracts Amiga users and vendors from around the world and revitalizes an industry.
McFiler Version 4.3, Tired of never knowing where your files are? Check out this catalog utility for a multitude of media, by Dave Matthews.
A New Beginning, Amiga developers meet to determine cooperative strategies to continue Amiga development.
The Amiga Sale: Round Two, Amiga Technologies' President, Petro Tyschtschenko, breaks a long silence to tell the Amiga community what has happened and his experiences.
DO IT NOW, We need your latest information to complete the long awaited AC's GUIDE.



VOLUME 12.6; JUNE 1997

New Products and other Neat Stuff, Gateway 2000 wins the Amiga, but will not speak until May 17th, Amiga web design with Pagemonster 1.0,Siamese System RTG v2.0, Asimware upgrades, and more.
Picasso IV, Is it time to see the world of your Amiga in a little more depth and color? Picasso IV is the latest edition to Village Tronic's long-running graphics card, by William Near.
Animating Video Backdrops, Use the Amiga and a few secrets to create sequences that rival those from the big boys, by R. Shamms Mortier.

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On Line, While THOR is just the god of thunder, rain, and farming of Scandinavian mythology, he is one powerful multitalented program for Amiga net surfers, by Rob Hays.
Final Writer 97, If you compose your prose, SoftWood has created a new version of their product word processing software designed to make your muse cruise, by R. Shamms Mortier.
Soft Shadows, To satisfy your thirst for a mystical look of soft shadows in your graphics and text does not require a large bite of effort, just a little reflection, by Nick Cook.
Games on the Amiga, I'm getting rid of my Amiga games. Got your attention? It's true. Peter talks about certain games that have exerted (and continue to exert) some sort of hold over him, by Peter Olafson.
Gateway 2000, Who are they? Where did they come from? Where are they going? Where does the Amiga fit in?
NewTek @ NAB '97, There are hundreds of displays at the National Association of Broadcasters each year, but NewTek remains a key player, by Thomas G. Reed.
DO IT NOW! AC's Guide form for Amiga Developers, Amiga Dealers, and Amiga User Groups.



VOLUME 12.7; JULY 1997

New Products and other Neat Stuff, It's Official Gateway 2000 is in charge! Opus 5 Magellan released, clickBOOM to produce PowerPC games, Cloanto releases PowerPC Library, and more.
New Logo Backdrop Ideas: (or "Brilliance Lives!"), When a computer program is a classic, it isn't old, just under utilized, by R Shamms Mortier.
Visual FX for Image FX, Making a great program even better! By R Shamms Mortier
Off We Go! Offset Type Creates Depth, By offsetting your type you can give some shady characters a rest, by Nick Cook.
On Line, On-Line News: How to get it and what you get! By Rob Hays
Games on the Amiga, Which Amiga games to kepp - part 2, by Peter Olafson.
New Life for Old Drawings, With creativity, rtaditional drawing practices and digital techniques can enhance each other, by R Shamms Mortier.
This Old Workbench: Episode 8 Amiga Anti Virus Programs, Computer viruses are very contagious. When your Amiga gets sick, you will also become ill, by Dave Matthews.
World of Amiga London—Another Amiga Success! Amiga vendors, Amiga users, and even the new Amiga owners gather in London to show new products and prepare for a new future.
Gateway 2000 & Amiga International, Jim Taylor of Gateway2000 and Petro Tyschtschenko of Amiga International address the Amiga market together for the first time.
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(continued from page 48)

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Other agreements in the pipeline...so, we are working very hard to show progress. Facts not only smoke!

AC: Should we expect to see a PowerPC AMIGA in the near future?

Petro: Good question. AMIGA International will explore the development of new hardware products including the processors that are needed.

AC: Can we expect to see standard CD ROM systems? Bundled software?

Petro: You can expect standard CD ROM systems. We will also continuing to bundle software.

AC: Are we going to see more A1200s in North America?

Petro: I think so. If I see my order intake, the USA is improving a lot . And this is a very good sign. I am running out of NTSC conversion kits, but I just recently placed an order to satisfy the US market. My wish is to install more US distributors, we need distribution channels.

AC: Can we expect a price reduction anytime in the near future for AMIGA computers such as the A1200 or the A4000?

Petro: Yes....I have aggressively reduced our distributor prices for A 1200 and A 4000 effective June 1st, 1997

AC: Are their quantities available for the A1200 and A4000?

Petro: Our AMIGA A 1200 are still available ex Warehouse, A 4000 also available sofar, but I have to think about further production.

AC: The AMIGA market has been without clear product and marketing for some time. The North American market felt deserted long before Commodore liquidated. Are there plans currently being made to jump start the market in North America? Will we see print advertising? Should any of us expect television advertising anytime in the near future?

Petro: In the old Commodore times 80% of the revenue was generated in Europe, and so far I remember, there was always a very professional marketing strategy driven.
Of course I will activate the North America market, but the most aggressive marketing activities will be definitely started, when we will have new products available. Current activities are to reinvigorate the AMIGA name through advertising, conventions, public relations and AMIGA Magazines. As a part of my business plan there is money set aside to develop the market place in a profitable manner.

AC: When discussing pricing and marketing, what does Gateway 2000 have to offer the AMIGA community?

Petro: Gateway 2000 is continuing to support AMIGA International, Inc. wherever it is needed and requested, but please remember: AMIGA International, Inc. will be treated as a separate subsidiary of Gateway 2000.

AC: Speaking of Gateway 2000, have they made any further announcements concerning the AMIGA? Do you know if we should expect some announcements this summer?

Petro: As I mentioned already before, we have special installed our AMIGA DIARY, at www.amiga.de and all news will be announced thereon immediately.

AC: Petro, you have been a fighter for the AMIGA for some time. You worked with the AMIGA through two bankruptcies. Yet, there are some people who have openly stated that if the same people are still in charge at AMIGA International now as in the past, that the same mistakes, low marketing, no real R&D and other

things will continue to occur. How do you battle your critics?

Petro: Oh boy...if you are a person working in public, like me, there are always some people who disagree with actions or decisions....mostly, because they do not see the whole picture.
Criticism is always welcome and even, if it hurts from time to time, I always listen to such comments. I try to understand the motivation and I respect criticism.

AC: Even though Gateway 2000 has purchased the AMIGA, made open statements concerning the longevity of the AMIGA platform, and have a history of doing what they say they will do, many AMIGA users are still unsure of Gateway's motives, or their true loyalty. How do you handle this problem?

Petro: I do not know why there are still AMIGA users which are unsure of Gateway's motives. I can tell everybody in our community that Gateway 2000 is the best solution for our so loved AMIGA. Gateway´s spirit fits exactly into our AMIGA spirit. A loyal user base, a good brand name and our technology are the best assets. I am so happy that we have found such a great home. I receive every day tons of email, and all most all of the users, which are writing to me, are meanwhile very pleased and convinced about Gateway 2000. Gateway 2000 has made a commitment to AMIGA and will stick to this commitment. Very easy and true.

AC: What has Gateway 2000 done to maintain the AMIGA market throughout the world? In North America?

Petro: Gateway 2000 invested a lot of money in AMIGA Technology and kept AMIGA alive.

AC: How many people have you hired in the last four weeks? How many people are now AMIGA International employees? How many more do you plan to bring on?

Petro: At AMIGA International, Inc. we are 7 people as of today. AMIGA International will grow with the business. Lean and effective, that is my slogan.

AC: Will AMIGA International; maintain a corporate office in North America?

Petro: The Corporate Headquarter is located in the USA. If further development shows a need for sales offices we will undertake any necessary actions.

AC: Many developers and users are concerned with the current state of the market. They believe that the AMIGA has been left idle too long and it can no longer compete with PCs and MACs using the latest technology. How do you and how should we, as AMIGA users, combat this problem?

Petro: I can only repeat myself. My strategy is based on three elements:
1) Supporting the existing AMIGA community
2) Leveraging the existing AMIGA technology through broad licensing
3) Assisting in developing new products based on open standards to the home computer and video/ graphics market
AMIGA users should continue to support the AMIGA technology.

AC: What message would you like to get directly to the AMIGA user?

Petro: Thank you for your support in the past. Trust me: good and great news will be announced in the near future. •AC•



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Jim Taylor,
Senior Vice President of Global Marketing,
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AMIGA® International, Inc.

Petro Tyschtschenko, President of Amiga International, discusses the possibilities and the needs of the next generation of the Amiga

Just four weeks after Petro Tyschtschenko made the announcement in London that the Gateway 2000 sale was complete, AC was able to get AMIGA International's president to discuss some of the problems, solutions, and opportunities facing the AMIGA community. In a phone and email question and answer session, Petro responded to our concerns.

AC: It has been almost four weeks since the press conference in London. First, can you tell us if you have hired a new R&D head?

Petro: We are improving every day. We will employ a Senior Engineering Manager from Gateway 2000 organization, who also understands the AMIGA very well. He will be located at Gateway 2000 in Sioux City. In addition, we are still identifying candidates, especially for Software, and interviews will be continued. But please understand that we will announce details in an official press release, in a professional manner and I promise you, that will happen very soon.

I am sure that you have already noticed on our web page www.amiga.de a special rubric called AMIGA's diary. You are welcome to follow up there all our performed activities.

AC: What is the major priority for an R&D group on the AMIGA at this time?

Petro: The priority is of course to upgrade our AMIGA Operating System 3.1. We will explore the development of an OS upgrade and will address the features and functions that are necessary.

"Of course I will activate the North America market, but the most aggressive marketing activities will be definitely started, when we will have new products available. Current activities are to reinvigorate the AMIGA name through advertising, conventions, public relations and AMIGA Magazines."

AC: At the press conference, you were adamant about keeping the focus of the AMIGA on one computer one goal, has this changed?

Petro: Not at all. I am keeping focused on one AMIGA and one goal. Our AMIGA market can not effort a split. We must go into one direction.

AC: You were also focused on licensing agreements from other companies. Does this mean phase5 and PIOS could be licensees but still allowed to create their own AMIGA?

Petro: Yes, you are correct. They can create their own AMIGA, but the platform must be compatible with our current Operating System and must be compatible with existing Software around our AMIGA. Before we will grant a license, we will check the technical side and performance benchmarks. If the test is passed, we will approve and license: POWERED BY AMIGA.

AC: Have you been able to come to an agreement with phase5?

Petro: We have contacted phase 5 and we are still in negotiations.

AC: Have you been able to come to an agreement with PIOS?

Petro: Also we have set up a meeting with PIOS and we are still in negotiations. As soon as there are some result, we will announce of course to the public.

AC: What other companies have you considered with regards to R&D and have you been able to come to an agreement with them?

Petro: We have negotiated an agreement with MICRONIC already and MICRONIC will have an A 1200 in a TOWER CASE available, "POWERED BY AMIGA". Three versions

(continued on page 46)

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